



# AUDUBON COUNTY 2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION



**A**udubon County, located in west central Iowa, is a quiet, rural county consisting of rolling hills, scenic views, and quality people. Within the county there are five cities and one river. The cities include Audubon, Brayton, Exira, Gray, and Kimballton as well as two unincorporated villages; Hamlin and Ross. The East Nishnabotna River and its tributaries provide drainage for the county. The river runs from the north central part of the county to the south parallel to U.S. Highway 71. The northwestern part of the county is drained by the tributaries of the West Nishnabotna River. The county is located equidistant to the two large metropolitan areas of Des Moines and Omaha. It is approximately 60 miles west of Des Moines and approximately 60 miles to the east of the Omaha area. Sioux City is also approximately 140 miles to the northwest.

The county has quality transportation access with U.S. Highway 71 and Iowa Highway 44 and the southern part of the county's close proximity to Interstate 80. There is also a good system of county highways that provide transportation from farm to market. There is an airport in the city of Audubon that is used by small aircraft. There is no rail service in the county.

The county also has a variety of recreational areas such as the T-Bone Trail which is planned to run from Audubon to Atlantic as well as Littlefield Recreational Area near Exira. There are several other city and county parks and tourist attractions scattered throughout the county.

Planning and zoning are two important tools for cities and counties to use to provide a high quality of life. Planning assesses the current conditions in an area and identifies strengths to build on and weaknesses to improve. It also sets out an implementation program that specifies when actions are to be taken.

Predominantly rural counties like Audubon are not usually concerned with many of the issues identified in the Iowa Code such as overcrowding, adequate light and air, traffic congestion because they are not faced with any of those problems and will likely stay that way for years to come. However, there are some issues that are very relevant to Audubon County. Concerns of farmland preservation, safety from fire, flood, panic and other dangers, and protection of soil from wind and water erosion are key issues for the county. Without a comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances, development could occur anywhere which would increase the chances for farmland to be wasted, erosion to occur, or the resident's quality of life to be threatened.

This comprehensive plan will address the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats gathered from public input. The issues Audubon County is facing as well as issues county officials and residents foresee will be discussed throughout the sections of this plan. Ideas for the county's future are included in this plan and this comprehensive plan will set the goals and policies necessary to bring the ideas to reality. Finally, the plan will serve as the legal basis for zoning, which will guide the way land is used as stated in the Iowa Code, Section 414.3:

*“The regulations shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan and designed to preserve the availability of agricultural land; to consider the protection of soil from wind and water erosion; to encourage efficient urban development patterns; to lessen congestion in the street; to secure safety from fire, flood, panic, and other dangers; to promote health and the general welfare; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to promote the conservation of energy resources; to promote reasonable access to solar energy; and to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements. However, provisions of this section relating to the objectives of energy conservation and access to solar energy do not void any zoning regulation existing on July 1, 1981, or require zoning in a city that did not have zoning prior to July 1, 1981.*

*“Such regulations shall be made with reasonable consideration, among other things, as to the character of the area of the district and the peculiar suitability of such area for particular uses, and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout such city.”*

A combined effort from the steering committee, County Supervisors, Audubon County citizens, the planning and zoning commission, and Region XII Council of Governments, this plan will meet the law stated previously. This document is intended to be a working tool for the county to use for years to come. With some hard work and commitment, the visions identified in this plan will become reality, making Audubon County a viable place to live and work for many years.



# CHAPTER TWO

# HISTORY



Audubon County was named after John James Audubon, who was a naturalist and artist. After he died in 1855, admirers named the new county in his honor. Throughout the early history of Audubon County there was a lot of conflict and battle over the location of the county seat. One report stated the original county seat was in Hamlin's Grove. Another report has the original county seat in Dayton in 1856 until the residents realized that Dayton would never survive as a town. The following year, it was moved to Viola, which is now called Exira. Ten years later in 1871, the first courthouse was built in Exira.



Original Audubon County Courthouse in Exira  
Source: traveliowa.com

Exira, Oakfield and Louisville battled over the location of the county seat for years, but it remained in Exira. In 1871, the Board of Supervisors approved construction for the courthouse in Exira. Once again, dispute over the county seat erupted. Between 1872 and 1873, Hamlin residents petitioned in attempt to regain the county seat, yet it remained in Exira.



Audubon County Courthouse Today

In 1878, the Rock Island Railroad linked Atlantic to the new city of Audubon. A year later, an election was held to determine the site of the county seat and Audubon was the winner. Several years after the move, Audubon received a grant to assist in the construction of a new courthouse, which was completed in 1939. Today, Audubon County is home to five incorporated cities: Audubon, Brayton, Exira, Gray, and Kimballton. There are two unincorporated areas which are still recognized by county residents: Hamlin and Ross.

## CITIES OF AUDUBON COUNTY

The City of Audubon is named for John James Audubon. The City was laid out by the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad on September 23, 1878. The railroad was completed on December 6, 1878 and by ten days later, there were over 50 houses, 26 retail/commercial establishments, and a school house. During the same year, due to rapid growth, there was talk of moving the county seat from Exira. In 1879, residents of Audubon County voted to move the county seat to Audubon during the general election.

In the 1870s, the Rock Island Railroad was being built in Iowa. Original plans for the railroad were to be built west of Brayton in Oakfield, but the proposed landowner, I.P. Hallock refused to allow the railroad to cut through his land. Citizens of what was not yet incorporated as the City of Brayton (John S. and John T. Jenkins) staked out their land and offered the railroad company \$500 to build the track across the land. The railroad accepted the offer, and constructed the railroad. The articles of incorporation were filed for record on August, 29, 1899 by the county recorder. During the early 1900s, the city was a thriving, busy town with businesses being built and changing hands quite rapidly. The City was devastated by a fire in 1929 which destroyed nine buildings. Then, two years later, the theater was destroyed by a fire. Also destroyed by fires was the Old Juhl Hall, a machine shop, a gas station, a warehouse and oil tanks. In 1930, Highway 71 was paved through Brayton and ten years later, the City built the town hall. Old Glory Park was constructed from a patch of ground on the south end of town which had been filled with weeds, old machinery, old cars, and an abandoned house. The park was built with a large amount of volunteer effort.

Exira is the oldest town in Audubon County and was founded in 1857. The town was named for Exira Eckman, daughter of Judge John Eckman from Ohio, who agreed to purchase a lot of property in the town if the town was named for his daughter. The mainline railroad never went through Exira, but the railroad was the reason the town was established. In 1856, Congress granted large amounts of land in Iowa to railroad companies to aid in the development of railroads across the state. The land where Exira now stands was granted to the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company to aid in the development of a railroad from Davenport to Council Bluffs. A few years later, the rights were transferred to the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Company. Before the railroad was built through Exira, the path changed and the railroad went through Atlantic instead. On July 2, 1958, Exira was flooded by the East Nishnabotna River. This flooding destroyed 75 homes, 20 businesses, and was the cause of nineteen deaths. One year later, in 1959, the City was home to one school. In 1861, the City of Exira held their first Fourth of July celebration and every year since, the community has held an event celebrating the Fourth of July.

The City of Gray was laid out on August 10, 1881 by George Gray and was named for him. This was the year that the railroad was built from Carroll to Audubon, and during this year, Gray boomed. In a short time the town boasted of two grain buyers, a hotel, drugstore, hardware, three grocery stores, a blacksmith shop, three saloons, and a dancing hall. When it was decided Gray needed a schoolhouse, it was decided to move the old Packard school building from northwest of Gray into town. Seven yoke of oxen were hitched to the building, and it was snaked in. In 1922 a fire destroyed the entire business district on the north side of Main Street. Chicago and Northwestern train service passed through Gray until June 14, 1952 when the last train passed through town.

Hans Jensen Jorgensen founded Kimballton in 1883 when he opened a post office at the site. It wasn't until 1888 that the town was officially established and 1908 when the town became incorporated. In 1978, the iconic Little Mermaid statue, which is a replica of the mermaid in Copenhagen, Denmark, was sculpted out of fiberglass and installed. Kimballton is one of the two largest rural Danish settlements in the United States.

## UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF AUDUBON COUNTY

The unincorporated community of Hamlin was laid out in 1872. The community was named for the pioneer settler named Nathaniel Hamlin. The community had a hotel, several stores, and a number of residences. After the community was defeated for the county seat, it declined. Today, Hamlin is most widely known for being home to “Darrell’s Place,” a local restaurant most widely known for their breaded pork tenderloin sandwich.

The unincorporated community of Ross was laid out and platted in July 1882 by the Western Town Lot Company. The community was named in for a nearby farmer according to the book “A History of the Origin of the Place Names Connected with the Chicago & North Western and Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railways.” In the early days of the community there was a post office (established in 1883), a blacksmith shop, a lumber yard, a general store, a hardware, and the Ross Grain Elevator. In 2018, the Ross Grain Elevator was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



# CHAPTER THREE

# POPULATION



# HISTORIC POPULATION

The first recorded decennial census population for Audubon County was in 1890 with a population of 12,412. Since then, Audubon has seen one small increase from 1890 to 1900. After 1900, the population has been continually declining. The 2020 Census counted Audubon County’s population at 5,674 residents. Figure 1.1 shows Audubon County’s historical population since 1890. Population decline throughout rural Iowa over the last half of the twentieth century is a common trend. This is due to industrialized agriculture, and younger populations seeking education, jobs, and amenities in larger markets.

Figure 1.1: Audubon County Historic Population, 1890-2020

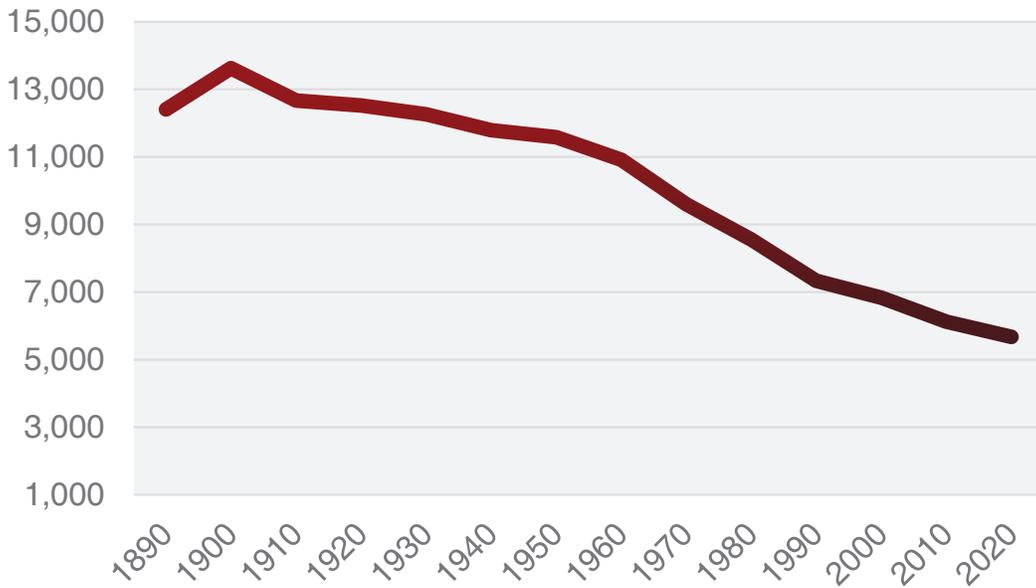


Figure 1.2: Audubon County Population Distribution by Jurisdiction, 1890-2018

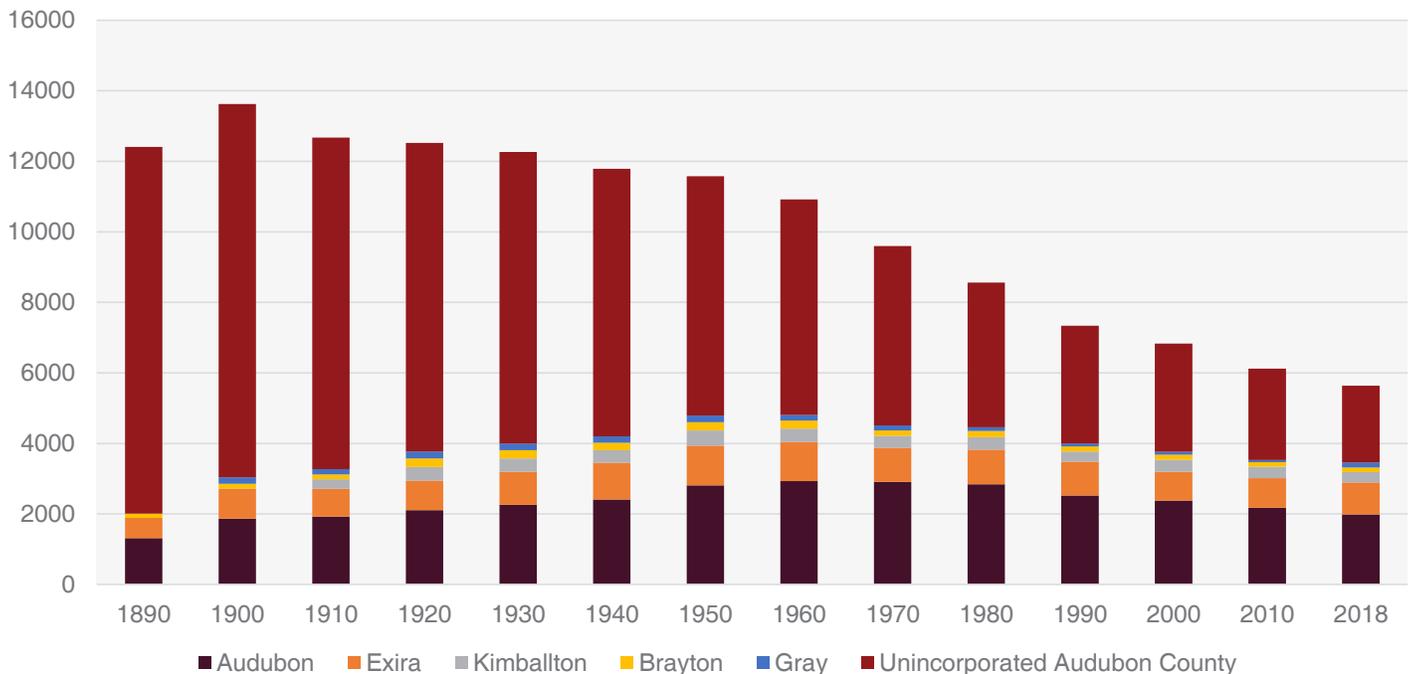


Figure 1.2 shows the population of each of Audubon County’s cities and the unincorporated portions of the County. It is important to understand that the trends show that a large number of citizens are moving from rural homes into the County’s cities. This is shown in Figure 1.2 where the population of rural citizens continues to decrease and the number of those residents living in the cities is growing.

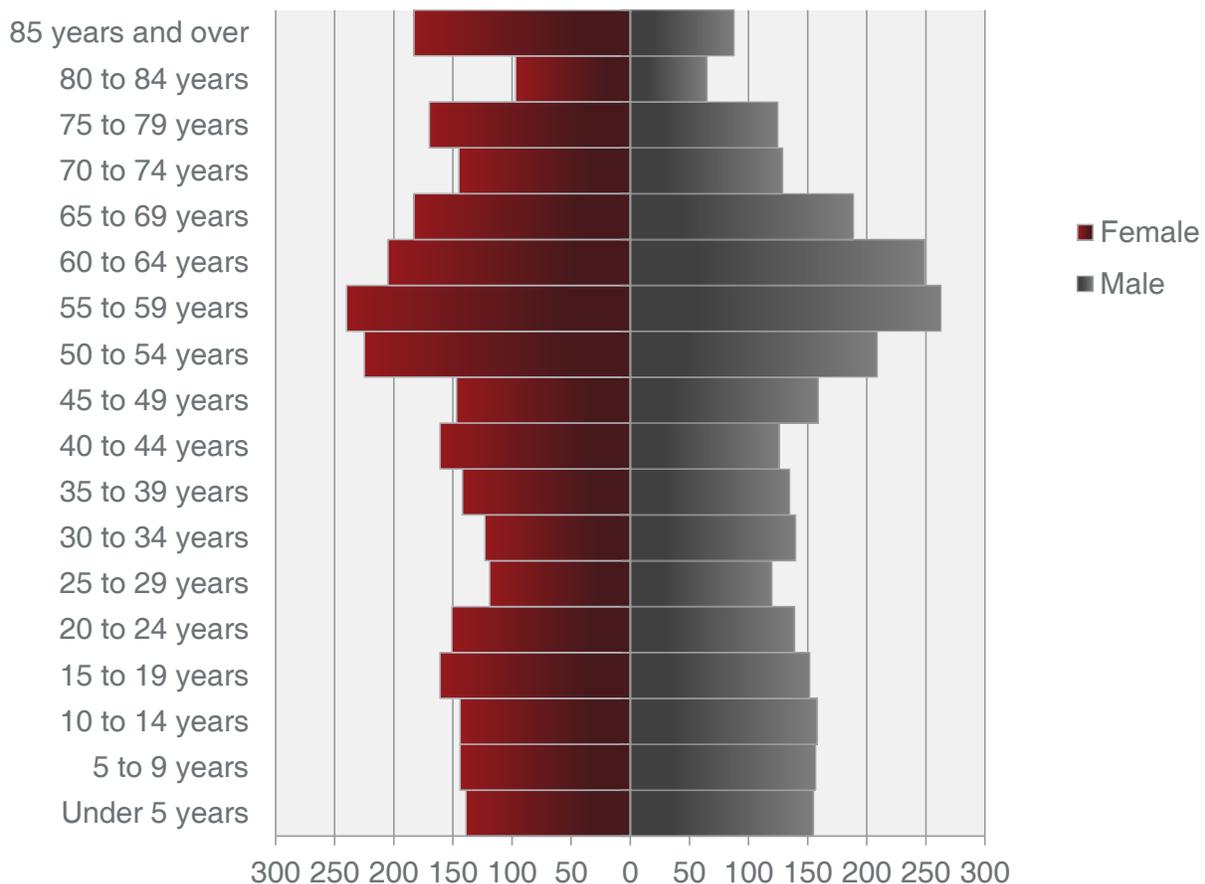
## POPULATION COHORTS

Figure 1.3 is Audubon County’s population “pyramid” for 2018. This figure breaks the population down into five-year age groups to present a more in-depth analysis of the city’s population. Audubon County’s “pyramid” is very similar to other rural parts of Iowa. A large majority of rural Iowa has a spike in residents aged 45-65 years.

There are pretty equal parts male and female in most age ranges which can potentially mean that a large majority of the older population are married. Comparing these ranges with the number of 15-19 year olds can possibly mean that these cohorts (45-49, 50-54, and 55-59) are parents.

It is also important to note the population aged 50 and over. During the lifespan of this comprehensive plan, many of these individuals will be retiring either within the county or other locations. This trend will likely affect the services in which the community has to offer to this particular demographic.

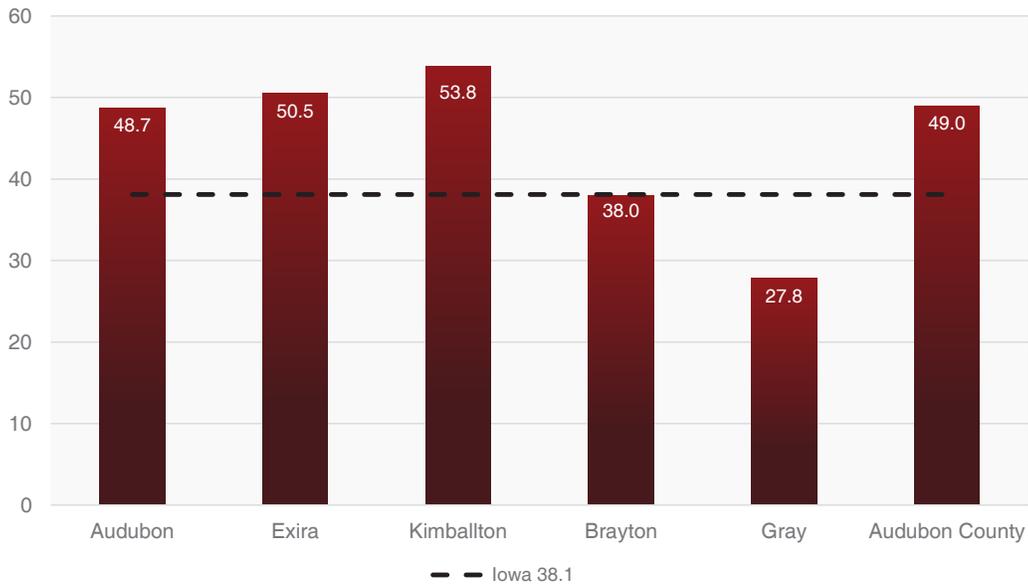
Figure 1.3: Audubon County Population Pyramid, 2018



# MEDIAN AGE

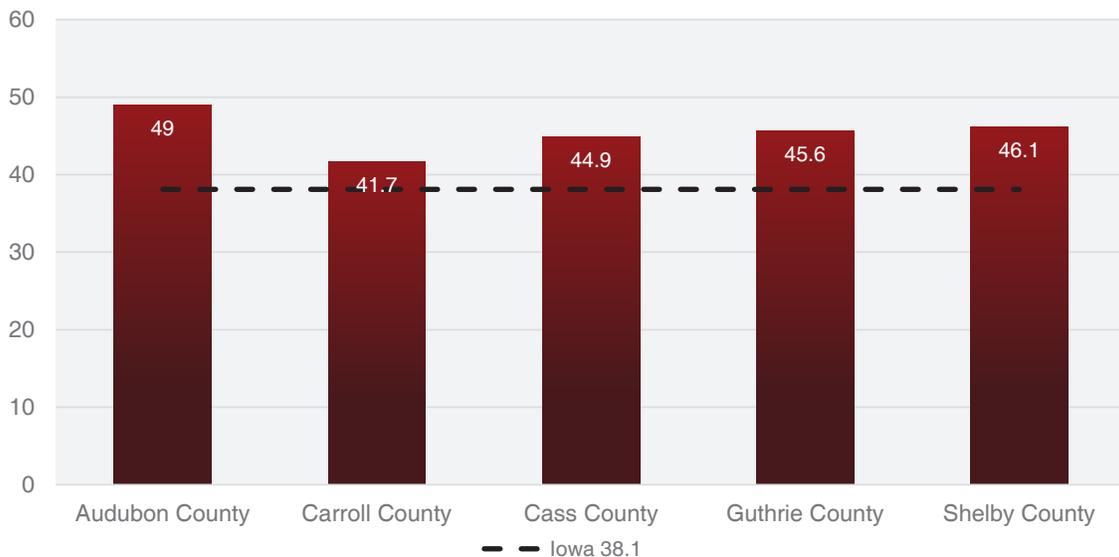
The median age is an important factor when comparing cities and counties as it provides community insight as well as how the cities in Audubon County compare to one another. Figure 1.4 shows how Audubon, Exira, Kimballton, Brayton, Gray, and Audubon County compare to each other and the entire State of Iowa. Kimballton has the highest average age in Audubon County, and is higher than both the County and the State averages. The only two cities that fall below the State average (38.1) are Brayton (38.0) and Gray (27.8).

Figure 1.4: Median Age Comparison (Cities), 2018



The figure below (1.5) compares the median age of Audubon County to other surrounding counties. Audubon County has the highest median ages (49.0) followed by Shelby County (46.1), Guthrie County (45.6), Cass County (44.9), and Carroll County (41.7). Audubon County has an average age of 49.0, which is also higher than the State average of 38.1. The easiest thing to infer is that there are not as many younger residents as there are older residents to bring the average age above the State average.

Figure 1.5: Median Age Comparison (Counties), 2018



# RACE

In 2020, over 96% of Audubon County’s population identified as white. It is important to note that Hispanic and Latino populations are a specific Census subset of white. In many rural Iowa communities and counties, people of Hispanic or Latino descent help stabilize otherwise falling populations. In Audubon County, the Hispanic or Latino population has grown slightly since the 2010 Census according to the 2020 Census counts. The counts show that the Hispanic or Latino population has increased by nearly 50 residents since 2010. The Table 1.1 documents the race responses from Audubon County and shows that the county did not experience any major changes in the makeup of the population within their respective boundaries.

Table 1.1: Race and Hispanic Origin, 2010 & 2020

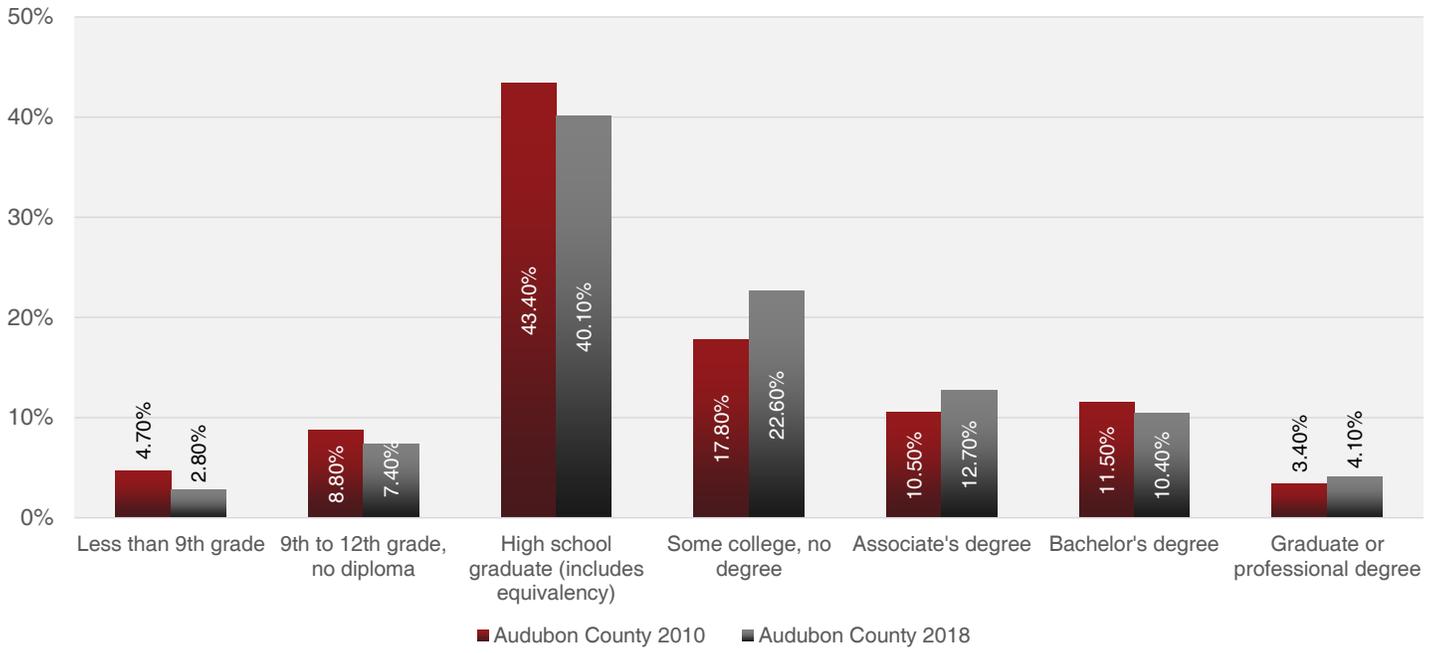
|  | Audubon County |             |              |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------|
|  | 2010 Census    | 2020 Census | 2020 Percent |
| Total population                           | 6,119          | 5,674       | 100.00%      |
| White                                      | 6,032          | 5,469       | 96.39%       |
| Black or African American                  | 10             | 17          | 0.30%        |
| American Indian and Alaska Native          | 8              | 5           | 0.09%        |
| Asian                                      | 25             | 5           | 0.09%        |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 1              | 1           | 0.02%        |
| Some other race                            | 6              | 30          | 0.53%        |
| Two or More Races                          | 37             | 147         | 2.59%        |
| Hispanic or Latino (of any race)           | 37             | 86          | 1.52%        |

# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The highest level of educational attainment for Audubon County’s population aged 25 and over has not changed significantly since the 2010 Census. The percent of population, for Audubon County which has less than 9th grade as their highest educational level has decreased since the Census. This trend was more noticeable when families required more help on the farm. This same circumstance affected those who attended high school but did not receive a diploma, which is shown through a decrease in the percentage of high school dropouts in the county.

Since the 2010 Census, there has been an overall decrease in the population which has completed high school, whereas some college and Associate’s degrees has increased. Audubon County has seen a decrease in the percentage with Bachelor’s degrees, but saw an increase in Graduate or professional degrees.

Figure 1.6: Audubon County Education Attainment, age 25 and over, 2010 & 2018



# CHAPTER FOUR

# HOUSING



Housing within a community is an important aspect to examine throughout the planning process. Being able to understand the characteristics of what the county has available as well as the types of housing that may be lacking or needing improvement can help the county with further housing developments. Ensuring that Audubon County has available and affordable housing is important for the county's economic success as an attractive housing stock can be used to attract potential employers and their employees to the community.

## HOUSING UNITS

The table shows the change in total housing units in Audubon County as well as the incorporated cities in the county. From 2000-2010 Audubon County saw a decrease in the housing units throughout the county, however, from 2010-2018 the housing units saw an increase of 1.24%. The city that had the highest increase from 2010-2018 was Gray, Iowa (61.11%) followed by Kimballton (14.01%) and Exira (13.03%). No cities in the county experienced a decrease in housing units from 2010 to 2018.

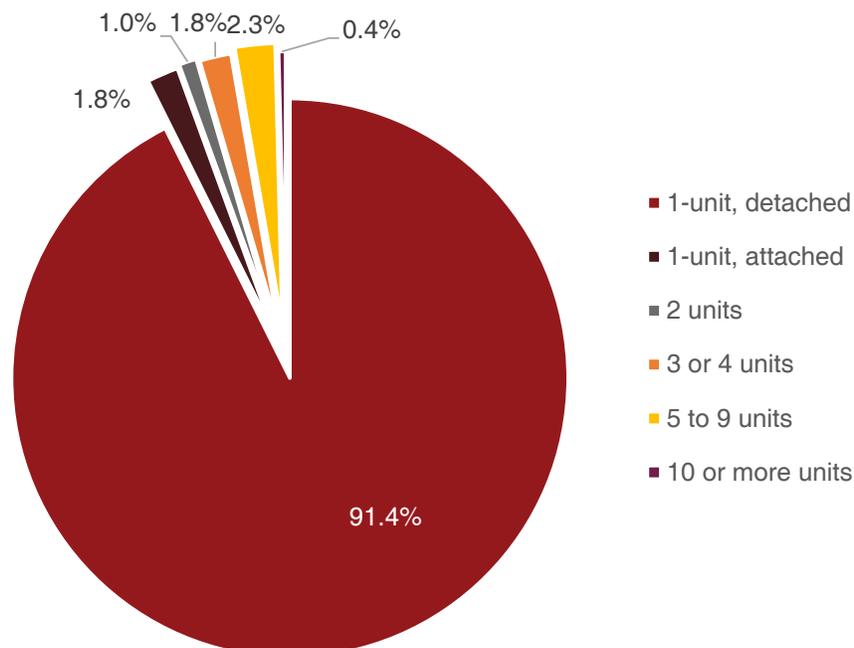
**Table 4.1: Total Housing Unit Percent Change, Regional Comparison 200-2018**

|                | 2000-2010 | 2010-2018 |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Audubon        | -0.09%    | 3.35%     |
| Exira          | 7.11%     | 13.03%    |
| Kimballton     | -2.48%    | 14.01%    |
| Brayton        | -4.11%    | 1.43%     |
| Gray           | -16.28%   | 61.11%    |
| Audubon County | -0.77%    | 1.24%     |

The total number of housing units within the county is important, but equally important is considering what types of housing units there are and who lives in them.

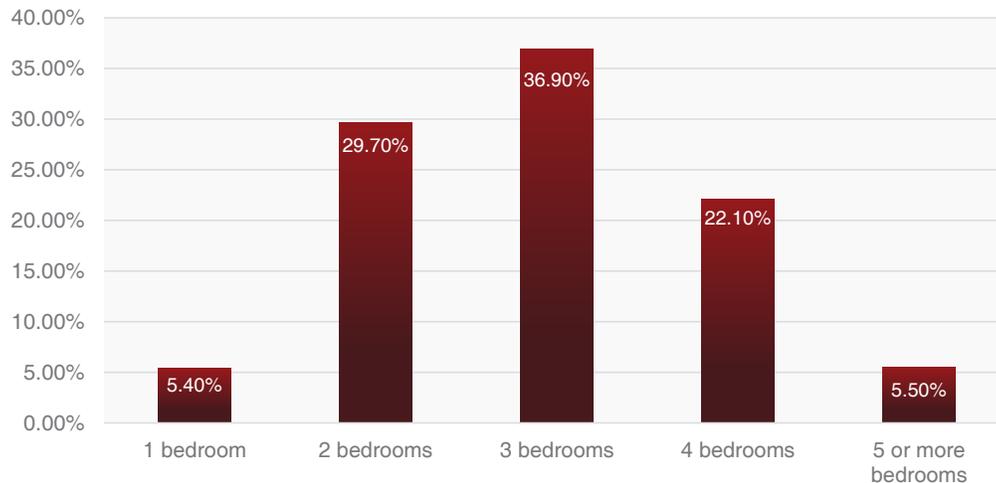
The pie chart breaks down what type of housing units the county's housing stock is made up of, according to the 2018 American Community Survey. The largest portion of the county's units are 1 unit detached, also known as single-family homes. The large number of one unit detached homes in Audubon County is similar to a large number of other rural Iowa counties. After the single family homes, apartment complexes with 3 or 4 units and 1 unit attached (both 1.8%)

**Figure 4.1: Audubon County Type of Housing Unit, 2018**



One of the biggest considerations people have for buying a house is how many bedrooms are located within a home. There have to be enough bedrooms available to accommodate the family’s wants or needs. The figure shows the number of bedrooms in the county’s current housing stock. The average household size in Audubon County is 2.06 and according to Figure 4.2, this average is realistic. Having a wide range of homes with a range of bedrooms allows the city to be attractive to households of all sizes.

**Figure 4.2: Audubon County Bedrooms per Unit, 2018**



## STRUCTURAL AGE

According to the 2018 American Community Survey estimates, there have been very few buildings built in Audubon County since 2014. The majority (63.00%) of the county’s homes are 58 years or older. Gray has the largest percentage of homes built 1939 or earlier, but the lowest percentage built after 1970. Table 4.2 has a complete breakdown of Audubon County and its incorporated cities housing stock ages.

Older structures do not necessarily mean a poor quality home, but modern homes use updated construction techniques and materials. These updated materials and techniques provide advantages when it comes to energy efficiency, longevity of materials (roof life, siding life, etc.), and updated safety requirements. The older a home is, the more likely it is to have potentially hazardous materials such as asbestos, knob and tube wiring, and lead paint which can put the residents of the home in potential danger.

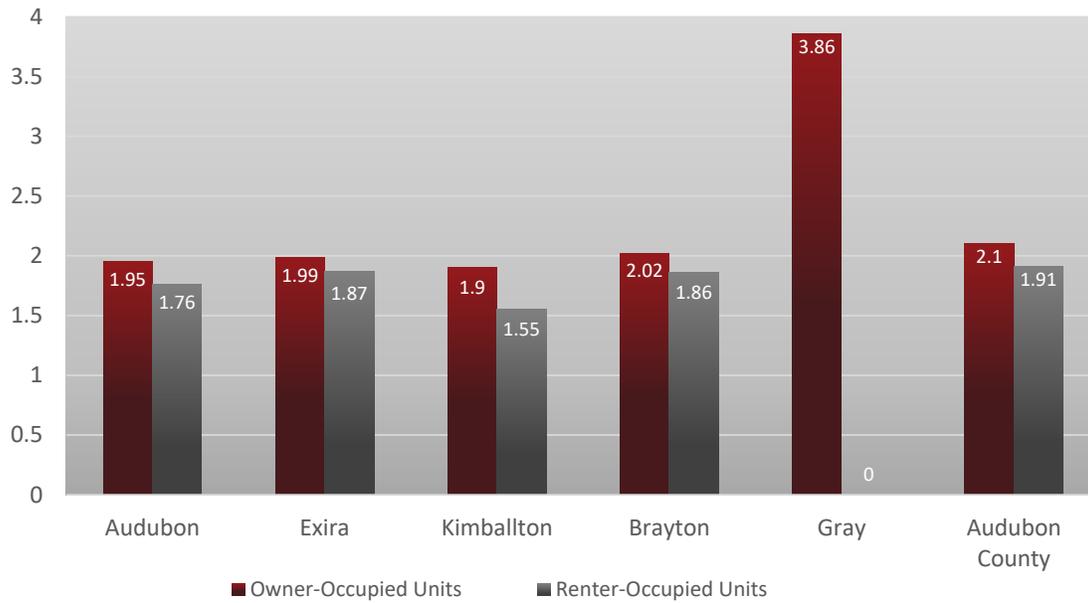
**Table 4.2: Audubon County Year Structure Built, 2018**

|                       | Audubon | Exira  | Kimballton | Brayton | Gray   | Audubon County |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|------------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Built 2014 or later   | 0.60%   | 0.00%  | 0.00%      | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 0.50%          |
| Built 2010 to 2013    | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 0.00%      | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 0.70%          |
| Built 2000 to 2009    | 1.80%   | 0.80%  | 0.60%      | 1.40%   | 0.00%  | 3.10%          |
| Built 1990 to 1999    | 3.90%   | 2.30%  | 3.40%      | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 3.20%          |
| Built 1980 to 1989    | 3.90%   | 4.40%  | 5.60%      | 16.90%  | 0.00%  | 5.00%          |
| Built 1970 to 1979    | 18.30%  | 6.90%  | 10.10%     | 8.50%   | 3.40%  | 13.10%         |
| Built 1960 to 1969    | 15.40%  | 16.10% | 7.30%      | 11.30%  | 0.00%  | 11.50%         |
| Built 1950 to 1959    | 17.80%  | 17.00% | 15.10%     | 2.80%   | 3.40%  | 12.40%         |
| Built 1940 to 1949    | 9.20%   | 12.20% | 12.80%     | 9.90%   | 3.40%  | 8.80%          |
| Built 1939 or earlier | 29.00%  | 40.30% | 45.30%     | 49.30%  | 89.70% | 41.80%         |

# AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

The average household size of a community can help determine the number of housing units needed to ensure that the future housing needs are met. In Audubon County, Kimballton has the lowest owner-occupied units at 1.9 people per household. Gray has the highest average household size in owner-occupied units with 3.86 people per household and the lowest average household size in renter-occupied units at zero. Figure 4.3 shows Audubon County's average household size compared to its incorporated cities.

Figure 4.3: Regional Average Household Sizes, 2018



# HOUSEHOLD TYPE

While the characteristics of the physical housing stock are important, it is also important to know what types of households are living within the city's units as different households may prefer or require different amenities. Tables 4.3 breaks down Audubon County's household types.

When comparing owner and renter occupied households, a few differences are noticed. Owner-occupied households are mostly made up of family households while non-family households within have a slight majority within renter-occupied units. The larger number of family households within the owner-occupied units can be the cause of a slightly higher average household size for the county's owner-occupied units over the renter-occupied units. This fact is backed by the large percentage (42.20% of the non-family households) of householders living alone within the renter-occupied units. Of those householders living alone, 9.70% is residents who are 65 years or older, 16.90% are householders who are 35-64 years of age, and 15.60% are aged 15 to 34.

Table 4.3: Audubon County Household Types, 2018

| Household Type                         | All Occupied Housing Units | Owner-Occupied Housing Units | Renter-Occupied Housing Units |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Family households                      | 60.4%                      | 63.9%                        | 48.2%                         |
| Married-couple family                  | 50.5%                      | 56.1%                        | 31.0%                         |
| Householder 15 to 34 years             | 7.1%                       | 7.4%                         | 5.9%                          |
| Householder 35 to 64 years             | 27.9%                      | 31.4%                        | 15.9%                         |
| Householder 65 years and over          | 15.5%                      | 17.3%                        | 9.2%                          |
| Other family                           | 9.9%                       | 7.8%                         | 17.3%                         |
| Male householder, no wife present      | 3.2%                       | 2.2%                         | 7.0%                          |
| Householder 15 to 34 years             | 0.6%                       | 0.7%                         | 0.5%                          |
| Householder 35 to 64 years             | 2.5%                       | 1.3%                         | 6.5%                          |
| Householder 65 years and over          | 0.1%                       | 0.2%                         | 0.0%                          |
| Female householder, no husband present | 6.7%                       | 5.7%                         | 10.2%                         |
| Householder 15 to 34 years             | 0.9%                       | 0.3%                         | 3.0%                          |
| Householder 35 to 64 years             | 5.6%                       | 5.1%                         | 7.2%                          |
| Householder 65 years and over          | 0.2%                       | 0.2%                         | 0.0%                          |
| Non-family households                  | 39.6%                      | 36.1%                        | 51.8%                         |
| Householder living alone               | 33.5%                      | 31.0%                        | 42.2%                         |
| Householder 15 to 34 years             | 6.5%                       | 3.9%                         | 15.6%                         |
| Householder 35 to 64 years             | 12.3%                      | 10.9%                        | 16.9%                         |
| Householder 65 years and over          | 14.8%                      | 16.2%                        | 9.7%                          |
| Householder not living alone           | 6.1%                       | 5.1%                         | 9.5%                          |
| Householder 15 to 34 years             | 3.4%                       | 2.5%                         | 6.5%                          |
| Householder 35 to 64 years             | 2.3%                       | 2.4%                         | 2.0%                          |
| Householder 65 years and over          | 0.4%                       | 0.3%                         | 1.0%                          |

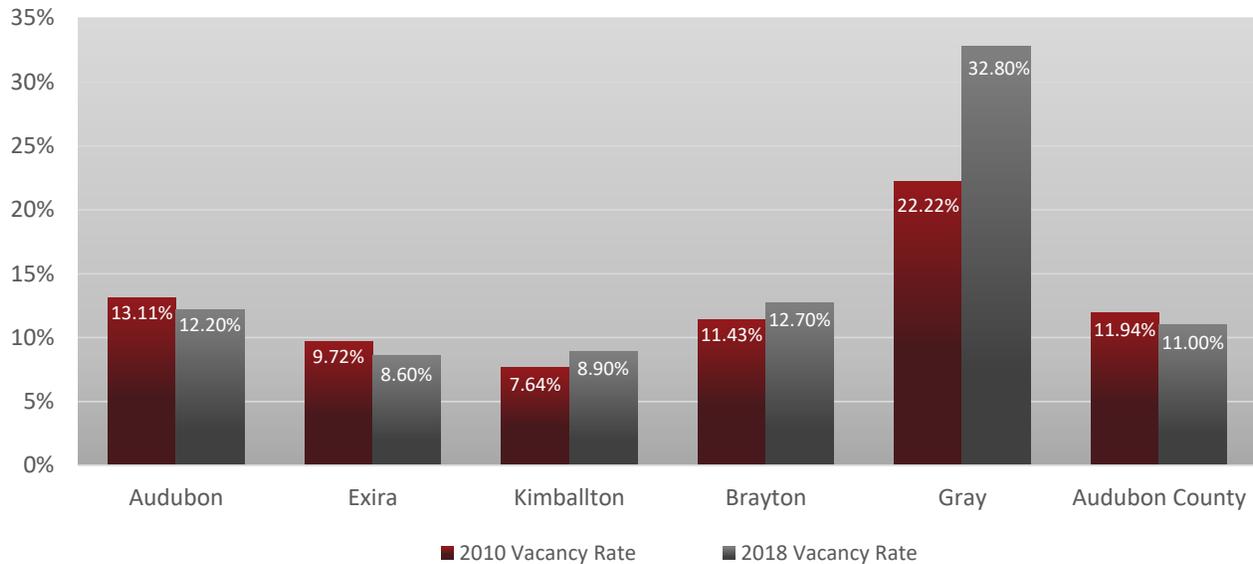
## VACANCY RATES

According to the 2018 American Community Survey estimates, Audubon County has 3,009 housing units. During the same time, the county had a vacancy rate of 11.00% or 332 housing units. The vacancy rate in 2018 has decreased from the 2010 Census 11.94% rate. This information is shown in Figure 4.3 while comparing Audubon County as a whole to its incorporated cities.

Kimballton in 2010, had the lowest vacancy rate of all of the cities with 7.64%, but in 2018, Exira had the lowest vacancy rate of 8.60%. From 2010 to 2018 Audubon County experienced a decrease in percent of vacant units, when three out of the five Audubon County cities experienced increases during that time period.

It is important for cities to have some vacant units throughout the city. Some vacancy allows for new residents to move into the city or county without having to wait for a family to move out. Vacancies also allow for current residents to move throughout the city or county if they would prefer to move out of their current home but not want to leave the city or county they live in.

Figure 4.3: Regional Vacancy Rates, 2010 & 2018



## MONTHLY HOUSING COST

Audubon County incorporated cities generally notice lower monthly housing costs for their residents compared to other places. Table 4.4 compares the median monthly housing costs for Audubon County and its incorporated cities in 2018. In 2018, homeowners with a mortgage spend around \$827 per month in Audubon County. Out of the incorporated cities, Kimballton has the highest regional monthly housing cost for homeowners with a mortgage. The city that has the lowest monthly cost of a home without a mortgage is Gray, Iowa (\$245). The cost for a home without a mortgage in Kimballton is the highest at \$341 a month, almost a hundred dollar more per month than in Gray. Audubon has the highest monthly rent at \$688 per month.

Table 4.5 compares the median monthly housing costs of Audubon County and similar counties. In 2018, homeowners with a mortgage pay about \$827 in Audubon County which is considerably lower than the surrounding counties. Out of the surrounding counties, Guthrie County has the highest regional monthly housing cost for homeowners with a mortgage (\$1,197). The homeowners who do not have a mortgage in Audubon County, on average spend around \$339 dollars a month. The county that has the lowest monthly cost of a home without a mortgage is Audubon. Renters in Audubon County who pay rent experience a median rent of \$567 per month. Shelby County has the highest monthly rent at \$673. Guthrie County has the highest median monthly cost for a home without a mortgage at \$462 per month.

Potential and current residents of a city need to be able to afford housing options to strongly consider moving into or staying within that particular city or county. Lower monthly costs allow for city residents to spend their money elsewhere which is vital for creating a strong, diverse economy which is attractive to businesses as well as residents.

Table 4.4: Regional Monthly Housing Costs, 2018

|  | Audubon | Exira | Kimballton | Brayton | Gray  | Audubon County |
|--|---------|-------|------------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Median Monthly Costs for Owner-Occupied Units with a Mortgage    | \$731   | \$646 | \$761      | \$655   | \$752 | \$827          |
| Median Monthly Costs for Owner-Occupied Units without a Mortgage | \$318   | \$311 | \$341      | \$309   | \$245 | \$339          |
| Median Gross Rent for Renter-Occupied Units Paying Rent          | \$688   | \$501 | \$485      | \$525   | -     | \$567          |

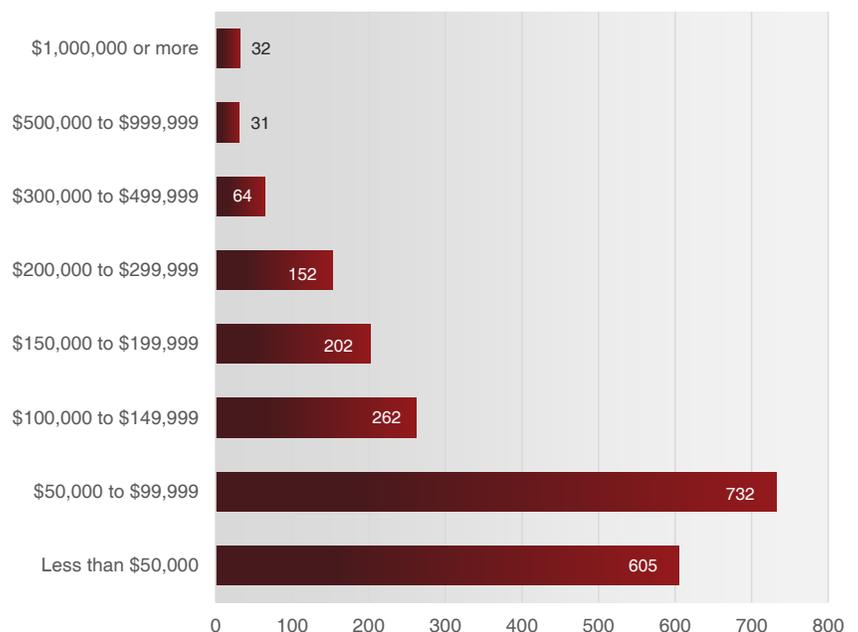
Table 4.5: Regional Monthly Housing Costs, 2018

|  | Audubon County | Carroll County | Cass County | Guthrie County | Shelby County |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| Median Monthly Costs for Owner-Occupied Units with a Mortgage    | \$827          | \$1,055        | \$940       | \$1,197        | \$1,077       |
| Median Monthly Costs for Owner-Occupied Units without a Mortgage | \$339          | \$392          | \$433       | \$462          | \$446         |
| Median Gross Rent for Renter-Occupied Units Paying Rent          | \$567          | \$598          | \$ 646      | \$662          | \$673         |

## HOUSING VALUES

Another important aspect surrounding housing is cost. Figure 4.4 shows the estimated housing values of the owner-occupied single-family homes within Audubon County. The current median housing value is estimated to be \$71,100, a slight decrease from the 2010 median housing value of \$72,900. Like many rural Iowa counties, Audubon County has a larger number of homes valued less than \$100,000 with the number of homes decreasing as the housing value increases. The complete breakdown of housing values within the County according to the American Community Survey is found on the right in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Audubon County Housing Values, 2018



# AVAILABLE PROGRAMS

## Habitat for Humanity

### **Homeownership Program**

Habitat for Humanity partners with qualified families and individuals to help them purchase new construction and previously-owned homes. The program lends aid to families who meet income requirements as well as a need for housing.

### **Rock the Block**

Rock the Block is provided by Habitat for Humanity and is an initiative which provides the opportunity for homeowners, organizations, volunteers and Habitat for Humanity to work together in assisting low-income residents with minor repairs to their homes. Qualifying homes may receive critical home repairs (interior or exterior work performed to help with critical health, life and safety issues, or code violations), weatherization (interior or exterior work to an existing home based on a comprehensive energy audit and a resulting defined scope of work) and home preservation (exterior work including replacement of materials to maintain good or sound conditions).

For more information contact: Habitat for Humanity of West Central Iowa at 712-587-1305 or at hfhwci@hotmail.com. The Habitat for Humanity which serves Audubon County is located in Carroll. The mailing address is PO Box 843, Carroll, IA 51401.

## Section 8 Housing

Region XII Housing Authority is the administrative body for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program for Audubon County. This program helps provide rental assistance for low income families. The program requires renters to pay between 30 and 40 percent of the rent, and the housing authority forms a contract with the landlord to pay the difference directly to the landlord on behalf of the family. To be eligible for this program, rental units must meet HUD's standards of safe and sanitary living conditions. Aside from the Section 8 program, the housing authority offers low income housing programs for those who meet program guidelines.

For more information contact: Region XII Housing Authority at 712-792-5560 or rgxniiha@qwestoffice.net. Region XII Housing Authority is located at 320 East 7th Street, Carroll, IA 51401.

## Community Development Block Grant

### **CDBG City-Based Home Improvement**

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) through the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) provides rehabilitation assistance for owner-occupied housing units. This program aims to assist households that meet the income requirements. The CDBG program is designed to rehabilitate homes to enhance the exterior envelope of a home, improve energy efficiency, or remove architectural barriers. The city applies and can potentially have 6 projects funded with \$24,999 available for each project.

For more information contact: Karla Janning, Housing Programs Coordinator at Region XII COG at 712-792-9914 or kjanning@region12cog.org.

## **CDBG City or County Based Homebuyer Assistance Program**

The Community Development Block Grant Program City or County Based Homebuyer Assistance Program through the Iowa Economic Development Authority assists low-to-moderate income homeowners with down-payment assistance up to 50% of the down-payment required and up to \$3,500 of closing costs.

For more information contact: Karla Janning, Housing Programs Coordinator at Region XII COG at 712-792-9914 or [kjanning@region12cog.org](mailto:kjanning@region12cog.org).

## **New Opportunities**

### **Weatherization**

The Weatherization Program aims to reduce energy costs for low-income families by improving the efficiency of their homes at no cost to the family. This program provides energy efficiency through insulating attics and sidewalls, air sealing, furnace and water heater replacements, minor repairs, as well as health and safety measures.

### **Energy Assistance**

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally-funded program that has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating season. By doing so, the risk of health and safety problems (such as illness, fire or eviction) are reduced. The assistance is based on household income, household size, type of fuel, and type of housing. Applications for energy assistance are also applications for weatherization of the home.

For more information contact: Albina Tigges, Carroll County Family Development Center Coordinator at 712-792-2832 or [atigges@newopp.org](mailto:atigges@newopp.org). The Carroll County Family Development Center is located at 23751 Highway 30 East, Carroll, IA 51401.

## **Region XII Revolving Loan Funds**

Loans are available to income-qualified homeowners in any of Region XII's member communities for down payment assistance and/or home repairs to eliminate health and safety hazards including windows, doors, roofs, furnaces, etc.

For more information contact: Karla Janning, Housing Programs Coordinator at Region XII COG at 712-792-9914 or [kjanning@region12cog.org](mailto:kjanning@region12cog.org).

## **Housing Trust Fund**

The COG Housing Trust Fund can assist potential homeowners located within Audubon County with down payment assistance and/or rehabilitation. This assistance can be in the form of a loan, grant, or a half grant half loan. The form of assistance is income based and participants of this program can receive up to \$10,000.

For more information contact: Ashley Owen, Housing Specialist at Region XII COG at 712-792-9914 or [aowen@region12cog.org](mailto:aowen@region12cog.org).

## Iowa Finance Authority

### **Workforce Housing Loan**

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) will provide financial assistance in the form of a repayable loan to cities and counties that demonstrate a need for additional workforce rental housing for Iowans as a result of employment growth within the local unit of government's jurisdictional boundaries. Only cities and counties in Iowa are eligible applicants for Workforce Housing Loan Program assistance.

For more information contact: Carolann Jensen, Chief Programs Officer at IFA at 515-725-4955 or [carolann.jensen@iowa.gov](mailto:carolann.jensen@iowa.gov).

### **Main Street Loan Program**

Loans are made for the rehabilitation of upper floor housing or commercial properties or for new construction on infill lots in downtown areas of communities that participate in the Main Street Iowa program. Up to \$250,000 can be loaned for the purpose of this program and applications are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

For more information contact: Tim Reinders at Main Street Iowa at 515-725-3077 or at [tim.reinders@iowa.gov](mailto:tim.reinders@iowa.gov).

## IEDA Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program

This program provides tax benefits to developers to provide housing in Iowa communities, focusing especially on those projects using abandoned, empty or dilapidated properties. The tax incentive includes a refund of sales, service or use taxes paid during construction. Developers may receive a state investment tax credit of up to 10% of the investment directly related to the construction or rehabilitation of the housing. The tax credit is based on the new investment used for the first \$150,000 of value for each home or unit. This tax credit is earned when the home or unit is certified for occupancy and can be carried forward for up to five additional year or until depleted, whichever occurs first.

For more information contact: Daniel Hansen, IEDA Project Manager at 515-725-3066 or [Daniel.Hansen@IowaEDA.com](mailto:Daniel.Hansen@IowaEDA.com).

## Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB)

### **Competitive Affordable Housing Program**

The Competitive Affordable Housing Program encourages partnerships between member financial institutions and local housing providers to secure funds for the purchase, construction or rehabilitation of affordable home ownership or rental housing units. Grants are available to sponsors including nonprofits, governments, housing authorities and other qualifying organizations.

### **Down Payment Program**

This program aims to help families achieve home ownership by providing down payment and closing cost assistance to eligible home buyers.

For more information contact: Karla Janning, Housing Programs Coordinator at Region XII COG at 712-792-9914 or [kjanning@region12cog.org](mailto:kjanning@region12cog.org).

## USDA

### Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program

This program assists approved households the opportunity to own dwellings as their primary residence in eligible areas. Applicants may build, rehabilitate, improve or relocate a dwelling. Funds may be used towards reasonable closing costs as well as repairs and rehabilitation.

For more information, contact: Mary Beth Juergens, Iowa Housing Programs Director for the USDA at 515-284-4667 or rd-grhia@ia.usda.gov.

## GOALS

### Explore options to improve existing housing stock

The public input survey found that over 35% of respondents feel that rehabilitation or preservation of the existing housing stock is an important goal moving forward. The rehabilitation or preservation of the existing housing stock will also improve the overall condition of the homes in Audubon County which is currently viewed as fair by a large percentage of the residents.

- Action Items:**
- Address abandoned/vacant homes
  - Utilize CDBG funds for current home rehabilitations
  - Encourage residents to utilize down-payment assistance for first-time home buyers

### Expand housing options for seniors

There are a number of older residents in Audubon County who may be ready to move out of their current home into something catered towards older residents. Current housing options for seniors are limited in number and styles. Creating a variety of different housing options for seniors will allow those ready to move out of their current home to do so into something where their independence can be retained.

- Action Items:**
- Explore options catered towards elderly married couples
  - Duplexes/triplexes with some amenities taken care of would be optimal
  - Audubon and Exira both have expressed interest in these types of properties

### Ensure all residents are informed about available grant and loan programs

Audubon County residents have access to a large number of grant and loan programs to help improve their housing situation. The problem with some of these grant programs is that residents are not informed about their availability and therefore they do not apply for the assistance when assistance is needed.

- Action Items:**
- Make cities aware that some programs require the city to apply before funds are available
  - Spread information about income requirements and other program requirements
  - Inform residents of the process to apply for and receive funds

## Address the need for new homes (either spec or custom builds)

New construction within the County is recognized as a goal to increase the diversity of housing that the County has to offer new and current residents. Recently housing has been in the center of a large number of discussions surrounding attracting new residents to work at local businesses. Limited new construction housing has even been a reason for losing a crucial employee prospect.

- Action Items:**
- Secure financial backing to build/purchase a spec home
  - Ensure potential lot locations are buildable
  - Start with building any number and continue as long as demand allows
  - Utilize available programs through IEDA and IFA to encourage new builds
  - Examine the potential usage of the Homes for Iowa program to secure new builds
  - Utilize infill lots in all communities
  - Investigate infill lot requirements to encourage construction on those lots and when necessary, work with the City to address potential barriers to construction

## Address the need for additional rental housing

Rental housing is a necessary part of the county's housing stock as it provides an additional housing type for current and potential residents. There are a number of reasons people choose to rent including those who move to town and maybe do not want to buy right away. It is important for the county to have a diverse stock of rental housing available.

- Action Items:**
- Construct duplexes/triplexes with maintenance of the property and building provided
  - Connect infrastructure to potential buildable lots

## Encourage creation of buildable lots

A hurdle that both Audubon County and its cities is facing is availability of buildable lots. While cities are open to construction, there is a lack of places where homes can be constructed. Having buildable lots available would eliminate a hurdle that can stop some people from constructing a new home.

- Action Items:**
- Create rural subdivisions
  - Create empty lots that allow for construction within the county

# CHAPTER FIVE

## PARKS & CULTURE



The extra amenities such as parks, recreational opportunities, and historic attractions are part of what makes a city home for a large number of people. Audubon County has a wide variety of resources available to both residents and visitors. The county's large number of historic, recreational, and cultural resources ensure that there is something for everyone of all ages to enjoy.

## PARKS & RECREATION

### Albert the Bull Campground

The Albert the Bull park has a modern campground with 40 hookups (30 amp and 50 amp), a shelter house with a fireplace, and electricity. The neighboring sports complex consists of a swimming pool, tennis courts, sand volleyball, track, baseball fields, and children's playground.



### Legion Park - Audubon

Located on 814 East Division Street in Audubon, the Legion Park has shelter houses, playground equipment, modern bathrooms, and spacious grounds.

### Bluegrass Park

Located on 400 Golden Street in Audubon, this park has a shelter house, playground equipment, and spacious grounds.



### Audubon Golf and Country Club

This is a nine-hole course in Audubon with a banquet room (catering available) located on 520 South Division Street, Audubon, Iowa.

### Audubon County Conservation Club

From May through October, the Audubon County Conservation Club has been the site of competitive trap and skeet shoots which are held twice a month on Monday evenings. Competitors and spectators are enthusiastic, even in the hot months. The Trap and Skeet Shoot Club is located a few miles south of Hamlin on the east side of Highway 71, formerly Isaac Walton Park.



## Plow in the Oak Roadside Park

This park is located south of Exira on Highway 71. It is a five-acre park with a picnic area and is a good spot to access the T-Bone Trail.



## Legion Park - Exira

The Exira Legion Park has a shelter house, baseball fields, tennis courts, basketball court, playground equipment, and modern bathrooms. In the city square you will find a large gazebo, fountain, table, benches, antique drinking water fountain, and much more.

## “Old Glory Park”

Located in Brayton on Highway 71 north of Interstate 80 by three miles, this park has a shelter house, play equipment, and excellent access to the T-Bone Trail.



## T-Bone Trail

The T-Bone Trail consists of over 20 miles of trails in Audubon County and into Cass County. This trail is used by bikers, walkers, and others who enjoy the easy accessibility of a smooth surface. The trail runs through the countryside along Highway 71. The trail begins at the Albert the Bull Park in Audubon and trails by Hamlin, Exira, and Brayton under Interstate 80 into Cass County.

## Kimballton City Park

Kimballton City Park is located just off Main Street in Kimballton. The park is home to a replica of the Little Mermaid statue of Copenhagan, Denmark. The park is also home to a smaller sculpture garden and the Audubon County Freedom Rock. The park features a playground and shelter house for visitors to utilize.



## Randi Jo Munch Memorial Park

The Randi Jo Munch Memorial Park is located in Hamlin at the intersection of Highway 71 and 44. This park is a great place to access the T-Bone Trail. The Randi Jo Munch Memorial Park in honor of Randi who lost her life unexpectedly.

## Littlefield Recreation Area

Littlefield Recreation Area is a 477 acre county park owned and operated by the Audubon County Conservation Board. The park is located east of Exira. The 70 acre lake is a popular fishing spot as it contains channel catfish, bluegill, crappies, largemouth bass, and carp. The lake is also a popular swimming spot. Littlefield has a campground with 100 modern sites, and all sites are utilized on a first-come, first-served basis with no reservations taken. Littlefield also has shelter houses which are reservable for private events.



## Heritage Rose Garden

The Heritage Rose Garden is a rose garden which boasts over 195 varieties of roses, including winter-hardy types. The rose garden started when four women wanted to attract visitors to the town. Their idea was to plant roses on the town square, and they did. A restored church steeple provides a centerpiece for the garden; other decorative items, and benches have been placed around the area. The garden can be visited from dawn to dusk each day.

## GOALS

### Maintain existing facilities

Audubon County currently has a variety of facilities that are designed for all ages and physical abilities. Ensuring the maintenance of these is a top priority. Many of the parks are self-funded by community organizations and ensuring that the existing facilities are maintained is vital.

**Action Items:** - Budget for and staff facilities

### Pursue additional amenities

Adding additional amenities as funding allows is essential to maintaining the high quality of life that Audubon County residents currently enjoy. Increasing the number of outdoor amenities at the parks would allow the county to continue to diversify the amenities it offers, helping it maintain the high quality of life it offers.

**Action Items:** - Consider general outdoor activities such as a frisbee golf course as funding becomes available

- Consider additional trail locations and activities along the trail
- Consider additional locations for campgrounds

# Historic & Cultural Resources

## Albert the Bull Park

In 1963, the Audubon Junior Chamber of Commerce made the plans for “Albert”. This statue would pay tribute to Operation T-Bone, as well as the state and nation’s beef industry. In choosing a name for the bull it seemed only fitting to name him “Albert” after Albert Kruse who originated Operation T-Bone.



There was one major stipulation in the Jaycees’ resolution to sponsor the project: that no solicitation of funds be made in the community. The project costs, estimated at \$30,000, were financed through various fund-raising activities and donations from agricultural industries across the nation.

“Albert the Bull” has been featured in several national magazines and newspapers, including “Remembering the Rock” in 2008. “Albert” was also in the movie “Beethoven’s 3rd” and mentioned on the television shows of “Jeopardy” and “West Wing”.



## Audubon County’s Nathaniel Hamlin Park and Museum

The Audubon County Home Historic District, now known as Nathaniel Hamlin Park and Museum was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015. The Historic District includes the following structures: the Audubon County Home, the Caretakers’ Cottage, the Meeting Hall, the Tenants Garage, the Wash House, the West Barn, the East Barn, the Machine Shed, the Country Schoolhouse, the Blacksmith Shop, the Elk Barn, and the

Elk Gazebo. Other parts of the site that contribute to the Historic Designation include the cemetery site, the cave, the reservoir, and fifteen windmills. The home and its additional structures were used to house indigent people of the county, which included the poor who couldn’t support themselves, as well as inebriates and the insane.

Today, the park is open year-round and allows for visitors throughout all seasons. The museum buildings are open on a regular basis from Memorial Day through September.

## John James Audubon Birdwalk Park

Admire the ceramic tile mosaics inset in the brick sidewalks throughout downtown Audubon and the John James Audubon Park. They showcase replicas of Audubon’s prints from “Bird of America”. Walk the Walk in Audubon and you can find a collection of art work honoring the famed artist and naturalist John James Audubon, for whom both the town and county were named.



## Kimballton's The Little Mermaid and Sculpture Park

Since 1978 a replica of the famous Little Mermaid statue of Copenhagen, Denmark has sat in the fountain at the city park a long way from her home in the sea. In 2013, eight different bronze sculptures depicting Hans Christian Andersen's famous tales graced the garden and can still be viewed today.



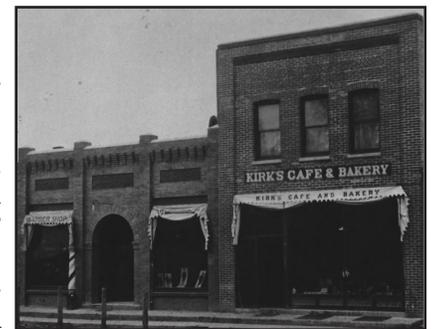
## Audubon County's Freedom Rock

Since 2014, the Kimballton Park has been home to the Audubon County Freedom Rock. The Audubon County Freedom Rock showcases Kimballton's Danish Heritage through the Little Mermaid Statue holding both the American Flag and the flag of Denmark. The Mermaid holding both of the flags represents the many Danish American soldiers from the area that served our country. The Freedom Rock incorporates many features from the county including the

Heritage Rose Garden in Gray, Albert the Bull, the Plow in the Oak, and the Tree in the Middle of the Road. The Freedom Rock also includes John James Audubon who the county was named after, as he was the artist who created "The Birds of America." The rock includes John James Audubon's goldfinch which is the Iowa State Bird.

## Kimballton Historic Properties and Districts

Within and immediately surrounding the City of Kimballton there are seven properties or districts on the National Register of Historic places. The Bennedsen, Boldt, and Hansen Building, located on Main Street was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. The building was previously the General Store, a barbershop, and Kirk's Cafe & Bakery. The property is a part of the National Register because it exemplifies the work of skilled Danish immigrant craftsmen in a Danish community utilizing materials manufactured by a local Danish immigrant-established industry. The building was constructed by Danish immigrants Niels Bennedsen (local mason), Hans P. Boldt (carpenter and manger of the Green Bay Lumber Company in Kimballton), and Hans P. Hansen (local carpenter) with materials manufactured at the Crystal Springs Clay Products factory situated at the south end of town.



Another property on the National Register of Historic Places is the Immanuel Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church located on W 2nd Street between Esbeck Street and Alfred Street. The Church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. The Immanuel Danish Evangelical Church is significant due to its association with the Grundtvigian synod of the Danish Lutheran Church following the historic split within the church in 1894 and for its influence upon the growth and development of the Danish community of Kimballton. This property is the best representation of that historic synod in the Kimballton



Community and the two county area. The Church embodies the characteristics of Danish immigrant religious properties, exemplifies the work of skilled immigrant craftsmen, and physically symbolizes the influence of the Grundtvigian congregation in the Danish community of Kimballton. It is also among the

best preserved historic Danish churches in the two county area and is the only Grundtvigian church to survive. The church is still used by members of the Kimballton community on a weekly basis.

The Hans J. Jorgensen Barn located at the northwest corner of Highway 44 and Main Street was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. The property best represents the life and accomplishments of Hans J. Jorgensen who was instrumental in the origin and growth of the Danish community of Kimballton. Jorgensen was born in Aero, Denmark and worked as a farmer and stock raiser in Denmark before moving to Illinois in 1874. He worked in Illinois as a farmhand for four years before migrating to Audubon County where he purchased land and established his farmstead. He donated the land for the platting of Kimballton. In addition to founding the community, he served as the first postmaster, donated the land for the first school and church, served as the President of the Kimballton Investment Company, and was instrumental in the construction of the Kimballton Hotel and the securing of the Atlantic Northern rail line to Kimballton. Jorgensen played an important role in the establishment of the Landmands National Bank.



Kimballton has two districts located on the National Register of Historic Places. The Kimballton Commercial District and the Kimballton West 2nd - West 3rd Street Residential Districts were both placed on the National Register in 1995. Both of these districts were critical in the initial development of Kimballton. Both districts showcase architectural features which were prominent during the city's origination. The buildings from these two districts were constructed utilizing locally-manufactured brick, clay tile blocks, concrete blocks, among other building materials. These materials were manufactured in local manufactories, which were established and operated by Danish immigrants and first-generation Danish-Americans. Between the two districts, there are 104 structures included in the historic districts. On the right, a small portion of the residential historic district is shown on the top, and a small portion of the commercial historic district can be found on the bottom.



Another property of historical significance near Kimballton is the Hans M. Koch House. This house is located on the west side of Iowa Highway 173 one half a mile south of Kimballton. This property is also known as the Brickyard Residence. This property was built to serve as the manager's residence for the Crystal Springs brickworks as it was situated within close proximity to the yard itself. The property also exemplifies the work of a skilled Danish immigrant craftsman and the products of an important local building industry established by Danish immigrants. The Koch house may be particularly significant in this regard as it is the only known example of a brick gabled double-pile house in the two county area and as such, even more closely resembles the Danish form which was commonly constructed of brick.



The Bethany Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church is located one and a half miles north of Highway 44 and one mile west of Bluebird Avenue. The church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. The church is the best surviving representation of the United Church congregation in the region. The church was constructed by skilled Danish carpenter/cabinet maker, Nis P. Hjuler, and it exhibits distinctive interior elements associated with Danish decorative arts in the region. From 1898 to 1924, the Bethany Church served as an active and important congregation of the United Church synod. Today, the church is still in use.



## Andrew P. Hansen Farmstead



The Andrew P. Hansen farmstead is located near Brayton in southern Audubon County. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. The building has been deemed significant due to the dwelling and both barns embodying the characteristics of particular building trends associated with Danish immigrants, specifically the Four-Square house type, gabled walls dormer variant, and the Transverse-Frame and Midwest Three-Portal barn types.

Andrew Hansen was born in Fyn, Denmark and immigrated to the United States in 1874. He purchased 40 acres of land in Audubon County in 1878. Hansen was important to the development of Audubon County as he acquired a large amount of farm land and would hire Danish immigrants on his farm. Hansen improved the original property to include “modern barns” and a home which was “strictly modern” having electric lights, hardwood floors, and “all other conveniences.”

## John D. Bush House

The John D. Bush House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. The property is located at 219 N. Kilworth Street, Exira. The property is significant due to it being constructed by Danish immigrant carpenter Jens Uriah Hansen, who was the first Dane to settle in Audubon County and was responsible for the construction of a number of the early buildings, homes, and outbuildings in the Exira area. Of all the documented buildings that Jens



Uriah Hansen built, the Bush house is the only one to retain such a high degree of structural integrity. It is the best representation of Hansen’s carpentry skills and is among the best examples of early Danish immigrant-influenced dwellings in the two county area.



## Audubon County Courthouse - Original and Current

The original Audubon County Courthouse is located at the intersection of Washington and Kilworth Streets in Exira. The building served as the County Courthouse from 1874 to 1879, and is thought to be the first building erected in the county specifically for use as a county government facility. Audubon County was organized in 1855. In 1855, the county seat was located in the “paper town” of Dayton. However, few people were willing to purchase lots

in Dayton, which caused for the relocation of the seat to move to Viola (now Exira). Disagreement over the location of the county seat was a favorite political pastime at the time, and Exira was challenged a number of times in the following years, and not until 1874 did Exira’s position seem secure enough



to warrant the construction of a real county government facility. That year, the building was erected. There continued to be disagreement over where the county seat should be located and in 1879, Audubon campaigned successfully for the relocation of the county seat. It has remained in Audubon ever since. The current county courthouse is located at 318 Leroy Street. Construction on the courthouse started in 1938 and was completed in 1939. It was one of ten courthouses built in Iowa during the federal Public Works Administration program's operation. The courthouse located in Audubon on Leroy Street is still the current county courthouse and is in use today.

## Audubon Public Library

The Audubon Public Library is a Carnegie Library which was constructed in 1912 by the architectural firm Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson from Des Moines. The Audubon Public Library is one of one hundred Carnegie libraries built in Iowa. The move to obtain Carnegie funding for a new public library began in March 1911 with a well-attended public meeting in the county courthouse. On April 16, 1911 673 votes were cast: 515 for the library and 142 against the library and a few "spoiled" ballots. By June 1911, the Library Board acquired land for the library building and by January 1912, plans were unveiled to the public. Construction began that spring and construction was finished by early fall 1912. The library was formally opened to the public on December 5, 1912. The library has not been altered in any significant manner since it was constructed. The library still serves the community in the same place it was originally built, over one hundred years ago.

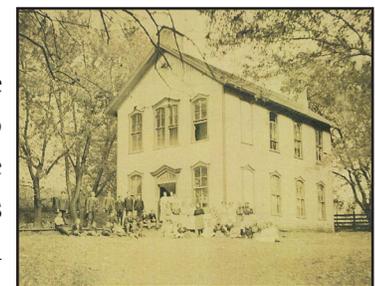


## Ross Grain Elevator

The Ross Grain Elevator, located at 5940 Main Street in Ross was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2018. The elevator, office, engine, and scale house were constructed in 1881 by Captain Charles Stuart. The annex was constructed in 1900. The grain elevator, constructed of wood, has a stacked limestone foundation which is different from the poured concrete foundations found in a majority of other wood elevators. The structure is built in a cribbed fashion which is known for its strength and expense as an enormous amount of lumber is needed. The Ross Grain Elevator is unusual that it was built into the side of a hill. The Ross Grain Elevator is located in the same place it was constructed 140 years ago.

## Oakfield Academy

The Oakfield Academy was built in 1871 on the east side of Oakfield. The building was first constructed as a two-story building, but in 1935, the top story was removed and placed on the ground. This second story is where the one-room school house was originally from. Materials from what was originally the first story were utilized to construct local homes. The one-room school house was utilized until 1959, when the school closed. After its closure in 1959, the school house was used as a rental property where a family lived without water for a number of years. After the family moved out, the building was utilized as a chicken house and storage building. Now, the building is owned by Mel and Dorothy Gross and the couple is working to restore the building.



## John James Audubon



The John James Audubon Plaza is home to a 20 feet tall, 8 feet wide stained glass clock. The clock features the exact universal time and is lighted at night. The plaza also has ceramic tile mosaics of Audubon's prints from "Birds of America." The mosaics are made by a native and nationally known artist, Clint Hansen.

The Audubon Post Office Mural is a 1930's art project in the Post Office that depicts John James Audubon and his party during their journey down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers along with the boatman and owners who dropped by for a little relaxation.



The entrance to the library hosts a large tile mural of John James Audubon and a Great Blue Heron designed by Judy Sutcliffe, Audubon native and nationally known tile artist. The library houses several John James Audubon prints and books; and has an origami mobile of over 1,200 paper cranes called "Free to Fly" by Linda Merk. The John James Audubon Cultural Center is part of the 1912 Carnegie Library.

## Tree in the Middle of the Road

At the crossroads one mile west of Audubon and Exira township line at the point where this line intersects the Cass and Audubon County line stands a large, old cottonwood tree. Legend says that a surveyor was marking the line between Audubon and Cass Counties and only had a cottonwood sprout on hand. The sprout took root and grew into the massive tree it is today, becoming the intersection of the two roads.



## GOALS

### Highlight Audubon County's History

Audubon County's history and the history of its cities is still present today. Making historical information readily available at historical sites should be considered to widen the availability of historical knowledge. The numerous historical sites around the county could be part of a county-wide educational tour.

- Action Items:**
- Choose venues to showcase historical information
  - Continue to promote and safeguard the county's historic properties
  - Find resources to preserve historic buildings/sites
  - Promote future museum/cultural center development

# CHAPTER SIX

# TRANSPORTATION



# STREETS

The lifeline of any area is usually the transportation system; more specifically in Iowa, roads and highways. Audubon County is no exception as most of the development is located along U.S. Highway 71. U.S. Highway 71 travels north and south through the center of the county and is the main route in and out of the county. Heading south, the highway intersects Interstate 80, which is a major transportation route across the country. Heading north to Carroll County, 71 intersects State Highway 141, which goes to Des Moines and even further north, intersects U.S. Highway 30, which is one of the busiest two lane routes in the state.

Within the county, there are hundreds of miles of county roads and highways as well. There are 724 miles of surfaced roads in the county and 39 miles of earth roads for a total of 763 miles of roads. The Iowa Department of Transportation also classifies roads according to their use by using the Federal Functional Classification system. A summary of these classifications is given on the right. The Federal Functional Classification of Audubon County's roads can be found in Map 6.1 on the next page.

The diverse road types in Audubon County create a variety of average annual daily traffic counts. The 2016 Annual Average Daily Traffic Map from the Iowa DOT is shown in Map 6.2. U.S. Highway 71 near the northern portion of the county has an average annual daily traffic count of 1,950 and the highest count for U.S. Highway 71 in Audubon County is 3,720 south of Audubon to Hamlin. Iowa Highway 44 runs from Kimballton on the west through Hamlin heading east. Just west of Kimballton, Iowa Highway 44 has 1,570 average annual trips and from Kimballton to Hamlin has an average of 880 trips a day. Iowa Highway 173 runs south of Kimballton to the county line and has an average of 1,850 trips today.

# AIR TRANSPORTATION

The Audubon County Airport, formerly Audubon Municipal Airport, is located one mile southeast of Audubon's central business district. This airport is owned by the Audubon County Airport Authority. It serves local aviation services as well as some additional services. The closest commercial airport is Eppley Airfield in Omaha, Nebraska (86 miles). Eppley Airfield is served by Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Delta, Frontier, Southwest, and United Airlines. The next closest commercial airport is the Des Moines International Airport located in Des Moines, Iowa (89 miles). The Des Moines International Airport services Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Delta, Frontier, Southwest, and United Airlines.

# Map 6.1: Audubon County Federal Functional Classification Map

FEDERAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP

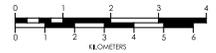
## AUDUBON COUNTY IOWA



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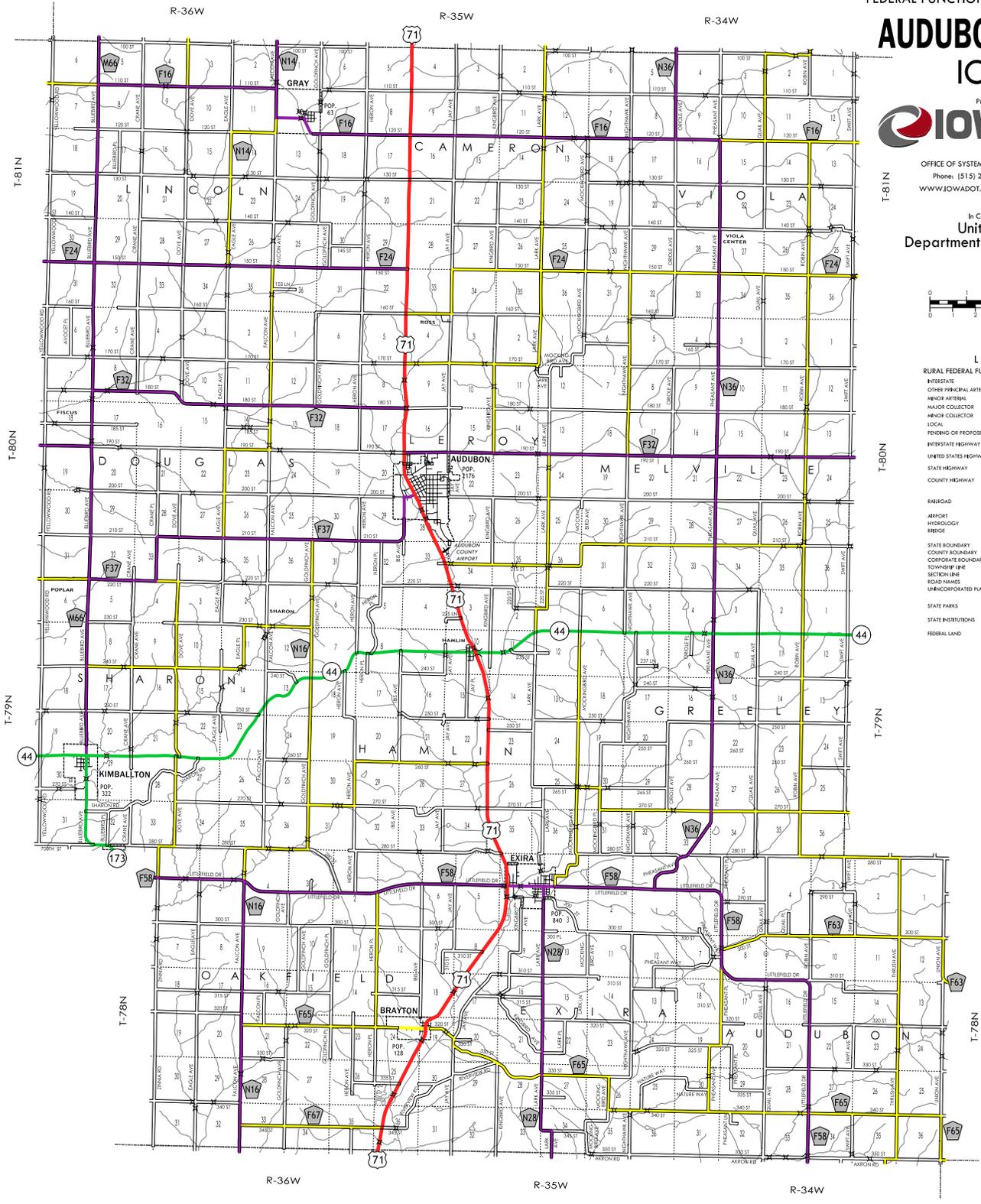


In Cooperation With  
United States  
Department of Transportation



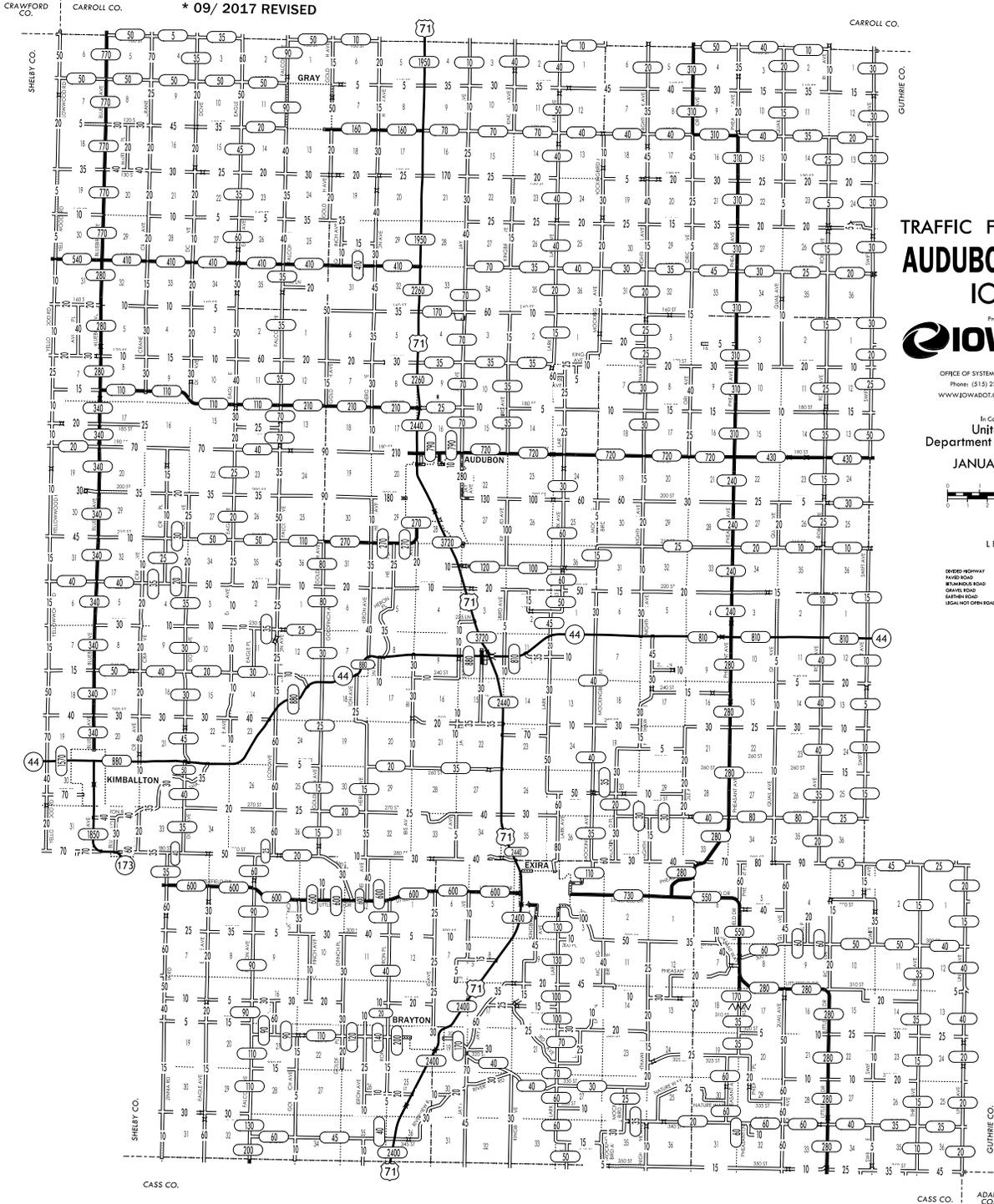
### LEGEND

- RURAL FEDERAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS**
- INTERSTATE
  - OTHER PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL
  - MAJOR ARTERIAL
  - MAJOR COLLECTOR
  - MINOR COLLECTOR
  - LOCAL
  - FENDING OR PROPOSED SHOWN AS A DASHED LINE
- ROADWAYS**
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
  - UNITED STATES HIGHWAY
  - STATE HIGHWAY
  - COUNTY HIGHWAY
  - RAILROAD
  - ABANDONED HIGHWAY
  - BRIDGE
- BOUNDARIES**
- STATE BOUNDARY
  - COUNTY BOUNDARY
  - CORPORATE BOUNDARY
  - TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
  - SECTION LINE
  - ROAD NAME
  - UNINCORPORATED PLACE
- LAND USE**
- STATE PARKS
  - STATE INSTITUTIONS
  - FEDERAL LAND



# Map 6.2: Average Annual Daily Traffic

**2016 ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC**  
**2012 ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC**  
 \* 09/ 2017 REVISED



## TRAFFIC FLOW MAP OF AUDUBON COUNTY IOWA

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In Cooperation With  
 United States  
 Department of Transportation  
**JANUARY 1, 2016**



### LEGEND

- 4-LANE HIGHWAY
- 2-LANE ROAD
- 2-LANE ROAD WITH CENTER TURN LANE
- 2-LANE ROAD WITH CENTER TURN LANE AND SHOULDERS
- 2-LANE ROAD WITH SHOULDERS



# COMMUTING

One of the more important aspects to consider when dealing with transportation is how Audubon County’s residents travel to and from work. The largest portion (82.40%) of Audubon county’s residents traveled alone to work. Carpooling is the second largest way residents of Audubon County travel to work at 10.00% The number of residents who walk (1.50%) are an important reason to ensure the county’s sidewalks stay in prime condition. Walking is the third largest transportation cohort in Audubon County. Also, almost 7% of Audubon County’s residents work from home which doesn’t require them to travel to work. The average commute time is 19.4 minutes.

The first table shows how incorporated cities in Audubon County travel to work compared to one another. The City of Audubon has the lowest commute time 18.8 minutes with a little over a 2-minute difference between it and Kimballton which has the second shortest commute at 21.2 minutes. Residents of Brayton experience the longest commute of the comparable cities at 28.4 minutes. Brayton has the largest percentage of workers who walk to work (1.30%) and Audubon had the second highest percentage (1.20%).

The second table shows how Audubon County’s residents travel to work compared to the surrounding counties of Carroll, Cass, Guthrie, and Shelby. Carroll County has the lowest average commute time at 13.4 minutes with almost a 4-minute difference between it and Shelby County which has the second shortest commute at 19 minutes. Residents of Guthrie County experience the longest commute of the comparable counties at 27.5 minutes. Cass County has the largest percentage of workers who walk to work (3.80%) and Guthrie and Shelby County have the second largest percentage (3.60%).

**Table 6.1: Audubon County Means of Commuting to/from work, 2018**

|                                | Audubon | Exira  | Kimballton | Brayton | Gray   | Audubon |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Total workers age 16 and over  | 1,009   | 412    | 142        | 77      | 94     | 2,872   |
| Drove Alone                    | 81.00%  | 86.90% | 85.90%     | 84.40%  | 83.00% | 82.40%  |
| Carpooled                      | 15.10%  | 7.80%  | 5.60%      | 5.20%   | 3.20%  | 10.00%  |
| Public Transportation          | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 0.70%      | 0.00%   | 0.00%  | 0.50%   |
| Walked                         | 1.20%   | 0.00%  | 0.00%      | 1.30%   | 0.00%  | 1.50%   |
| Other Means                    | 0.50%   | 2.90%  | 1.40%      | 0.00%   | 13.80% | 1.20%   |
| Worked from Home               | 2.30%   | 2.40%  | 6.30%      | 9.10%   | 0.00%  | 4.40%   |
| Average Commute Time (minutes) | 18.8    | 22.4   | 21.2       | 28.4    | N      | 19.4    |

Table 6.2: Regional Means of Commuting to/from work, 2018

|                                | Audubon County | Carroll County | Cass County | Guthrie County | Shelby County |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| Total workers age 16 and over  | 2,872          | 10,544         | 6,318       | 5,215          | 5,876         |
| Drove Alone                    | 82.40%         | 83.00%         | 79.00%      | 79.10%         | 77.90%        |
| Carpooled                      | 10.00%         | 6.60%          | 10.40%      | 11.10%         | 10.20%        |
| Public Transportation          | 0.50%          | 0.30%          | 1.00%       | 0.20%          | 0.50%         |
| Walked                         | 1.50%          | 2.40%          | 3.80%       | 3.60%          | 3.60%         |
| Other Means                    | 1.20%          | 1.10%          | 0.80%       | 1.00%          | 1.00%         |
| Worked from Home               | 4.40%          | 6.60%          | 5.00%       | 4.90%          | 6.70%         |
| Average Commute Time (minutes) | 19.40          | 13.40          | 19.10       | 27.50          | 19.00         |

Figure 6.1: Inflow/Outflow Counts of Primary Jobs, 2018

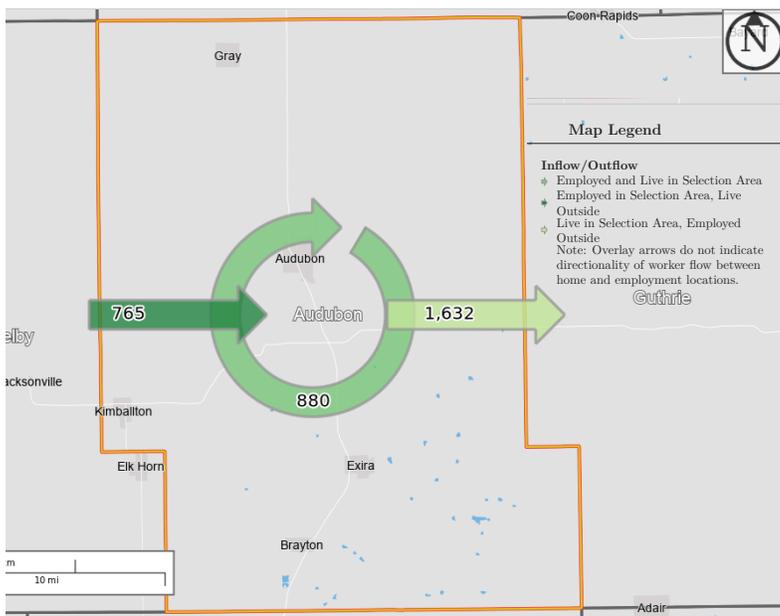
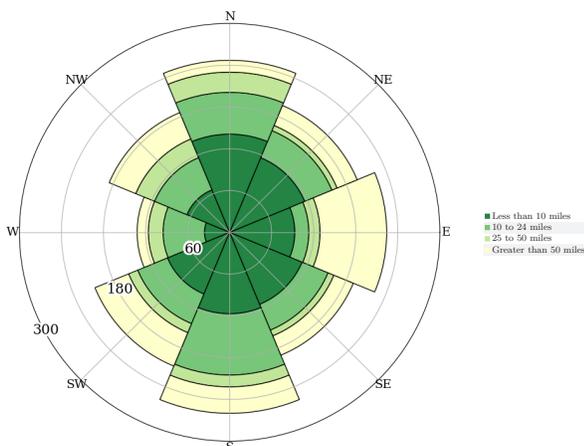


Figure 6.2: Distance/Direction traveled from home to work, 2018



While evaluating how residents travel to work, it is important to also recognize where the workers are going. Figure 6.1 shows how many residents are traveling from outside Audubon County for work, how many are staying within the county for work, and how many are leaving the county for work according to the American Community Survey. There are 880 workers who live and work within Audubon County and 1,632 live in Audubon County, but work outside the county lines. Businesses in Audubon County employ 765 workers who live outside the county. For those who do not live and work within in the same Census Block, figure 6.2 shows how far and in what direction they travel. Workers who travel north and south are the largest cohorts according to the chart, followed by those who travel east and then north east and south west. Those traveling north and south have large percentages who travel 10 to 24 miles, which would put them in Atlantic or Carroll. Those who travel east have a large percentage that travels greater than 50 miles, which would be the Des Moines metro area.

# GOALS

## Maintain existing transportation infrastructure

Maintenance and condition of existing transportation infrastructure is a major transportation issue. Some streets within the county need a new asphalt overlay, while others have already had several overlays and must be reconstructed. There are also bridges within the county which need maintenance. These projects should be completed as funding allows. The projects listed in the action items below are ways in which the county and its communities plan to maintain existing transportation infrastructure.

- Action Items:**
- Redo/expand 7th Avenue in the City of Audubon
  - Rehabilitation of East Division Street in the City of Audubon
  - Repave all streets in the City of Kimballton
  - Repave all streets in the City of Gray
  - Improvements to F58 (Littlefield Drive) to and through Exira
  - Resurface County T west out of the City of Brayton
  - The through streets in Audubon (S Division, E Division, NW Division) need repaved due to the current pavement buckling from winter cold and summer heat
  - Grade county gravel roads on a regular basis
  - Pavement improvements at the intersection of M66 & 100th Street by Puck Enterprises
  - Rehabilitation of a large number of Kimballton sidewalks
  - Rehabilitation of the City of Audubon's sidewalks
  - Brayton bridge rehabilitation/conversion to culvert
  - Continue to inspect county bridges and develop a schedule to ensure maintenance and replacement when necessary
  - F32 widening & resurfacing
  - East Side Drive to Mockingbird around cemetery in Exira upgrades and paving

## Expand existing transportation infrastructure

As communities and rural businesses expand, it is important to expand the current infrastructure to match the needs of the homes or businesses. A number of expansion projects have been identified has high priority to be able to meet the needs of the county or community.

- Action Items:**
- Expand Industrial Road South in the City of Audubon
  - Pave South Division Street West (200th Street)
  - Pave 130th Street west of US Highway 71 for the first mile towards Handlos Feed Mill
  - Widen county roads where needed to improve transportation flow or safety
  - Extend 100th Street
  - Sidewalk connections for Exira Elementary School
  - Sidewalk connections for the Audubon Community Schools
  - Construct/expand the long-term/usable parking in Audubon's downtown
  - Pave/Expand 190th Street (industrial zoning)
  - Pave the intersection of 44 and Lark to Landus Cooperative

## Transportation enhancements

The transportation facilities in Audubon County are adequate and allow travelers to get from Point A to Point B. While this is adequate, enhancing the route can lead to additional routes beginning and ending within the County. Making enhancements as noted in the action items below can help create an inviting corridor.

**Action Items:** - Execute the Highway 71 corridor plan and carry it throughout the county

## Trail Enhancement/Continuation

The T-Bone Trail is easily accessible by those who live in Audubon, Hamlin, Exira, and Brayton. Continuing to expand the trail system and connecting it to other regional trails would allow for more riders to utilize the system for transportation as well as leisurely rides.

- Action Items:**
- Repave the Exira Trail Extension
  - Continue trail to Ross then up to Gray
  - Finish trail connections to Cass County and surrounding trails
  - Resurface trail where needed
  - Upgrade trailheads to make them stand out and attractive
  - Pave portions of the trail where it is currently gravel
  - Create points of interest along the trail with lighting/art/signage
  - Install mile markers along the trail to utilize in case of emergency

# CHAPTER SEVEN

# INFRASTRUCTURE



# WATER

Rural Audubon County is served by a few rural water associations. West Central Iowa Rural Water Association of Manning currently serves a few residents in the northern part of the county and has a franchise agreement with the City of Gray. Regional Water from Avoca will serve much of the southwestern part of the county including the rural county surrounding the City of Kimballton. Households that are not connected to rural water or wish not to be connected to rural water get their water from private wells.

The cities within Audubon County provide water through municipal utilities. Each city has different water rates which also can affect their sewer rates. The City of Audubon's water comes from a City-owned well. The City of Brayton purchases water from a regional source. The City of Exira utilized purchased ground water. The City of Kimballton's water comes from a city-owned well. Audubon, Brayton, Exira, and Kimballton all prepare utility bills for the residents of their community. The City of Gray is served by West Central Iowa Rural Water Association in Manning. The City of Gray does no water utility billing to its residents.

# SEWER

Residents of the City of Gray and those outside of city limits within Audubon County have private septic systems. The installation and replacement of septic systems are overseen by the Environmental Health Department which is contracted with Guthrie County. The Cities of Audubon, Brayton, Exira, and Kimballton have city-wide sanitary sewer systems which serve the residents of the communities.

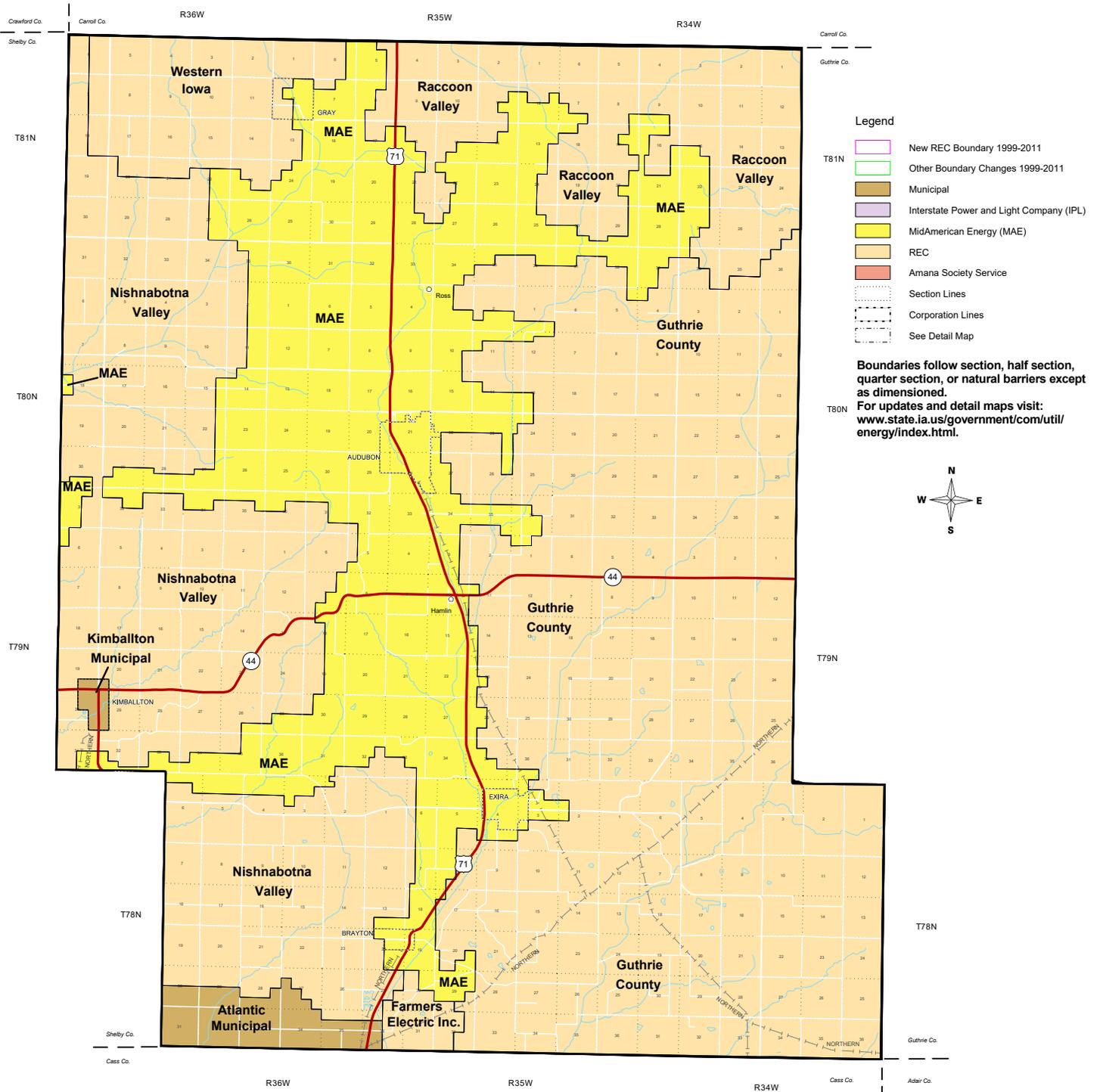
# NATURAL GAS

MidAmerican provides natural gas to Audubon, Exira, Brayton, Kimballton, and Hamlin. The pipeline runs across the southeastern quadrant of the county. The City of Gray has no natural gas provider.

# ELECTRIC

Audubon County is served by eight electricity providers. MidAmerican Energy provides service to the central area of the County from the northern to southern borders. Guthrie County REC Association provides service to a large portion of those in the eastern portion of the county. The Nishnabotna Valley REC serves most of the western residents. Kimballton Municipal Utilities serves the City of Kimballton with electricity. Other electricity providers include, Western Iowa, Raccoon Valley REC, Farmers Electric Inc., and Atlantic Municipal. Map 7.1 shows the electrical service area reference map for Audubon County.

# Map 7.1: Electrical Service Area Reference Map, 2011



# TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Windstream (formerly Iowa Telecom) is the primary provider of telephone service in Audubon County, serving over half of the county. Marne and Elk Horn Telephone Company provides telephone and wireless Internet service to the southwestern residents of the county. Farmers Mutual Telephone Company of Shelby County serves the far western area of the county. The Aureon Fiber Optic Network directly serves Audubon, Hamlin, and Kimballton. The other communities, except Gray, within the county are served by a partner network. Fiber Platform, LLC, Mediacom Communications Corporation, Panora Communications Cooperative, and West Iowa Telephone Company dba WesTel Systems also provide internet service to portions of the county.

Farmers Mutual Telephone Company, Marne Elk Horn, Mediacom, and Windstream all offer landline phone service to residents of Audubon County. Residents of Audubon County have access to a number of wireless providers including, Verizon, U.S. Cellular, Sprint, AT&T, and T-Mobile.

Three communities have access to the Iowa Communications Network. The Iowa Communications Network is an interactive closed circuit tool that allows classes and workshops to be broadcast throughout the state. This tool is frequently used by colleges and universities, high schools, and state agencies. The Audubon County Memorial Hospital, National Guard facility, and the Audubon school offer ICN access within the City of Audubon. The Exira-Elk Horn Kimballton schools also have access to the ICN.

# GOALS

## Maintain/Upgrade Existing Services

The existing services provided to Audubon County residents are vital to a good quality of life. Being able to maintain these services at the current level is a priority for not only the county, but the cities as well.

- Action Items:**
- In Kimballton, inspect then slip line and/or replace sewer mains as found necessary
  - In Kimballton, inspect then slip line and/or replace storm sewer mains as found necessary
  - In Audubon, rehabilitate manholes
  - In Audubon, replace fire hydrants which do not meet current standards
  - In Audubon, replace water valves as necessary
  - In Audubon, install a larger water main(s) heading south from the city
  - Work with Windstream to provide upgrades to the internet services within the County
  - Eastern Audubon County has internet connectivity issues, work with providers to reduce these connectivity issues
  - In Kimballton, upgrade the electricity generation, transformers, and bury remaining power lines for the City-owned electricity utility
  - In all communities and the county, acquire back-up generators to provide power for essential city facilities
  - In Audubon, seek additional locations for new city well and fund project to construct the new well

## Expand Current Service Areas

There are portions of the rural county and portions within city limits which are not currently served by certain utilities. Being able to expand the service areas of the existing utilities will create opportunities for development within the county.

- Action Items:**
- Extend services to the outskirts of the communities to allow for additional housing developments
  - In Audubon, extend water main south to AMANCO
  - In Audubon, expand sewer and water service to and outside city limits

## Complete Upgrades to Emergency Service Infrastructure

There have been changes to the equipment that the emergency services within the county are to use. The changes to these equipment now require a change in the infrastructure that this equipment uses. In order to protect the emergency responders within the County, it is important for the infrastructure to be upgraded to better serve the new equipment.

- Action Items:**
- Install additional towers to provide service to previously “dead” areas
  - Install additional repeaters to decrease issues with radio communication
  - Equip all agencies with the necessary radios, including the County Engineer’s Office



# CHAPTER EIGHT

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Audubon County has a large number of facilities which are devoted to serving the community. There are number of facilities that benefit the county as a whole such as the Sheriff's Department and County Hospital/Ambulance, and there are also specialized services.

## Audubon County Courthouse

In 1939, the Audubon County Courthouse was constructed at 318 Leroy Street, Audubon, it's current location. The Audubon County Courthouse is home to the Auditor, Assessor, Attorney, Courts, Emergency Management, Public Health, Recorder, Treasurer, Supervisors, Sheriff, and Veterans Affairs.



## Sheriff's Department

The Audubon County Sheriff's Department provides of law enforcement to the County. The Sheriff's Department is located in the basement of the courthouse at 318 Leroy Street. The department is staffed by the County Sheriff, four full-time deputies, and one full-time civil deputy. The department provides 24-hour coverage.

## Fire Departments

There are four fire departments based in Audubon County. These departments include: Audubon, Brayton, Exira, and Kimballton. These departments serve communities and rural areas primarily in Audubon County, but can extend into other counties through their own jurisdictions and mutual aid agreements. Other departments outside of Audubon County also serve fire protection to Audubon County.



## Audubon County Congregate Meals

Congregate Meals are served at two different locations in Audubon County. Meals are served at the Good Neighbor Service Center is located at 410 N Park Place in Audubon and at the Lions Club Building at 104 E Washington Street, Exira. Congregate meals are a program of Elderbridge Agency on Aging.

## New Opportunities

The Audubon County Family Development Center is located at 109 Tracy Street in Audubon. New Opportunities is one of 17 Community Action Agencies serving the state of Iowa. Iowa's Community Action Agencies are locally-based private, non-profit organizations that network with a wide-array of local organizations to enhance the opportunities for low-income Iowans (children and families) to meet basic needs and develop their own capacity to do so. The Audubon County Family Development Center offers the following programs/services: food pantry, mobile food pantry, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Utility Crisis Assistance Weatherization, Clothing Disaster Assistance, Financial Literacy Counseling & Education, Back to School Supplies, Backpack Program, Christmas Toys, and Holiday Food Baskets.





## Post Offices

The Audubon Post Office is located on 428 Tracy Street. There is also a drop box available for after hour drops. The facility is open Monday-Friday from 9 AM to 4:30 PM and Saturdays from 9 AM to 12 PM.

The Brayton Post Office is located on 200 County Trunk Road. There is also a drop box available for after hour drops. The facility is open Monday-Friday from 12 PM to 2 PM and Saturdays from 12 PM to 1:45 PM.

The Exira Post Office is located on 101 N Carthage Street. There is also a drop box available for after hour drops. The facility is open Monday-Friday from 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM, 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM. On Saturdays, they are open from 9 AM to 11 AM.

The Gray Post Office is located on 204 Main Street. The facility is open Monday-Saturday from 11 AM to 1 PM.

The Kimballton Post Office is located on 207 N Main Street. There is also a drop box available for after hour drops. The facility is open Monday-Friday from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM and Saturday from 10 AM to 11 AM.

## Education

There is one school district headquartered within Audubon County; Audubon Community School District. However, there are parts of other districts within the county and there are some students that opt to open enroll at districts outside the county. Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton schools includes students in Kimballton and Exira, but is headquartered in Elk Horn.



The county is home to one private pre-school, St. John's Christian Preschool. St John Preschool is located in Audubon within St John Lutheran Church. The school offers a Christian based education for children 3 or 4 years of age, with the focus being school readiness skills.

There are also several secondary educational opportunities within a short distance of Audubon County that offer advanced degrees in a variety of fields. Nearby colleges and universities include:

- Iowa State University, Ames
- Creighton University, Omaha
- University of Nebraska, Omaha
- Drake University, Des Moines
- Grand View College, Des Moines
- Iowa Western Community College, Council Bluffs
- Des Moines Area Community College, Carroll, Ankeny
- Southwestern Community College, Creston
- Western Iowa Tech, Denison



## Healthcare

The Audubon County Memorial Hospital located in Audubon is the lone hospital in the County and has 29 beds with an average occupancy of 36.6%. There are also three family physicians, two dentists, optometrists/ophthalmologists, and one chiropractor.

Hospital services include emergency services, acute care, skilled nursing services, laboratory, radiology, respiratory therapy, sleep studies, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and surgical services. In addition, they offer several specialty services including orthopedic, mental health, audiology, plastic surgery, hand and microvascular, sports medicine, pain management, podiatry, dermatology, oncology, spine surgery, cardiology, urology, head and neck surgery, and urology. The hospital also owns and operates two rural health clinics, Audubon Family Health Clinic and Exira Medical Clinic. Their clinics offer complete care from newborns to senior adults by providing well child check-ups, age-appropriate preventative care, sports and school physicals, immunizations, and treatment of occasional and ongoing illnesses.

Emergency medical services are provided by the Audubon County Ambulance with volunteer Emergency Medical Technicians. Audubon County has a county-wide E911 system, and calls are dispatched by three full-time and two part-time dispatchers. Ambulances are stationed in Exira and Audubon. Audubon County is also served by Midwest Transport and Midwest Med-Air. Midwest Transport transports patrons from hospitals to facilities. Midwest Med-Air is a helicopter ambulance service that provides service to the entire county.

## Caring & Sharing

Caring & Sharing is a non-profit, non-perishable food/clothing pantry for Audubon county residents. Caring & Sharing is located in the Audubon Memorial Building and is open limited hours.



## Daycares

Audubon County is served by one State Licensed Daycare and numerous in-home daycare providers. The Children's Nest is a licensed facility which practices intergenerational programming with the adjacent elderly care facility, The Friendship Home. The Children's Nest serves children aged 6 weeks to preschool. The facility opened in 2015 as a non-profit organization. Audubon County is also served by a number of in-home daycares. These daycares serve children of similar ages as the Children's Nest just in a more private setting.

## Exira Food Bank

The Exira Food Bank is located at the Exira Christian Church at 201 E Main Street. The food bank is open to qualified residents of the Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton School District.



## Elderbridge Agency on Aging

Elderbridge Agency on Aging is part of a national network designed to address the needs and concerns of older adults. Their goal is to enable our constituents to: Make informed decisions; Easily access home and long-term care options; Remain



in their homes as long as possible with a high quality of life; Stay active and healthy; and Promote and experience an ongoing safe environment. Elderbridge provides services to Audubon County through its field office in Carroll. Elderbridge's services fall into seven categories, supportive services; health, prevention & wellness; family caregiver support; older worker employment program; elder justice & adult protective services; Medicare support; and private pay for services.

## GOALS

### Develop plans for health care provider recruitment

In order to maintain existing services, it will be important for health care providers to have resources available to recruit new providers to existing practices. It will also be beneficial for the cities and counties to have resources available to recruit new providers.

- Action Items:**
- Coordinate with health care providers
  - Meet the needs of the community
  - Ensure needed services are available within the county
  - Explore next steps for healthcare professionals

### Ensure Daycare needs are met

Having daycare providers whether licensed or unlicensed is important to the growth and development of the county. For families to work, there needs to be a place for children to go where they are cared for and developed. Having enough quality providers within the county is critical.

- Action Items:**
- Attract licensed daycares to the communities within the county
  - Attract in-home daycares to the communities within the county
  - Assist daycares in attracting staff

### Develop plans for teacher recruitment

The current school systems in Audubon County require teachers to be able to continue to provide the high quality education that they currently provide to their students. Teacher recruitment is always a goal to continue to provide a quality education.

- Action Items:**
- Coordinate with school systems to determine teacher needs
  - Assist the schools when possible to help meet their needs



# CHAPTER NINE

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION



## Audubon County - Cities

Audubon County works with a number of cities within the county to provide police protection as the jurisdictions are too small to warrant their own police departments. The Audubon County Sheriff's Office provides protection to the cities of Brayton, Exira, Gray, and Kimballton. For the City of Audubon, this may also be in effect within the near future as the costs continue to rise to maintain their own police force.

There are a number of services that the county provides to cities. Audubon County provides snow removal services for the City of Gray. Audubon County Secondary Roads/EMA provides 911 sign placement throughout the county.

Fire departments within the county provide services to each other as well. The Audubon Fire Department covers a portion of Exira's jurisdiction. In some instances, departments respond through mutual and automatic aid to help provide fire and rescue services throughout the county.

The county works with all of the jurisdictions through the development of the comprehensive plan. The planning process is headed by a county-based steering committee of the Planning and Zoning Commission, but all communities have been invited to provide input and attend meetings to ensure that the plan benefits the county and all cities within it.

## Audubon County - Regional

Audubon County works with Shelby, Guthrie, and Cass Counties to provide road maintenance to roads that border the county. A partnership between Audubon County and Cass County provides trail maintenance and expansion throughout the two counties. Audubon Public health provides a large number of the Public Health services to the county, but contracts with Guthrie County to provide sanitarian and home health services.

In July, 2018, Audubon County became a Home Base Iowa Community. Home Base Iowa connects Iowa businesses with qualified veterans and their spouses looking for career opportunities. The program also provides resources to help connect veterans and their families with education and in transitioning to a new community.

Audubon County is a member of Region XII Council of Governments and Western Iowa Advantage. Region XII Council of Governments was organized in 1973 to assist local governments in Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie, and Sac Counties in western Iowa. Region XII COG has two departments: Local Assistance and Western Iowa Transit. The Local Assistance Department provides technical assistance to communities in the areas of planning, infrastructure, transportation, housing, grant writing, recreation, ordinances, zoning, economic development, and other community and county projects. Western Iowa Transit is a demand-response public transit system that serves the six county region. Western Iowa Advantage is a multi-county collaborative marketing effort and the Region XII Development Corporation, which has several revolving loan funds for business development and expansion.

Audubon County joined an agreement to join the Western Iowa Workforce Development Area. This agreement allows Audubon County and seventeen other counties to work together to administer the

program. This program operates local American Job Centers which includes consultation regarding policies related to and funding of infrastructure costs.

Audubon County also is in an agreement to plan for and implement watershed improvements within the West Nishnabotna Watershed. This agreement is between eight counties (including Audubon County), eight cities, and eight Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This agreement ensures that the planning efforts of the organizations located in the West Nishnabotna Watershed are cohesive and work towards similar goals. The county has also entered into a similar agreement as the West Nishnabotna Watershed for the East Nishnabotna Watershed. The East Nishnabotna Watershed agreement includes eight counties (including Audubon), six cities, and seven Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

## Audubon County - State of Iowa

Audubon County is a part of the Hungry Canyons Alliance which was formed locally to research and implement solutions to the problem of stream channel erosion and degradation in a 23 county area of the deep loess soils region of western Iowa. The Hungry Canyons Alliance was formed through help from the 23 counties and Golden Hills Resource Conservation & Development. This alliance is working to find affordable solutions to stream channel erosion and degradation in order to preserve the 404 bridges that are endangered due to stream channel degradation. This program has utilized state and federal appropriations to complete 290 grade control structures in 17 counties in western Iowa. Another 29 structures are currently in progress.

Audubon County works in agreement with the Iowa Department of Transportation to perform driver's licensing functions, including skill testing and issuance of non-commercial and commercial licenses, non-operator ID cards, and disability ID devices. The county and state DOT also work together on a number of road projects and DOT inspections annually. The two jurisdictions also cooperate to provide maintenance and services, including policing, to U.S. Highway 71, and Iowa Highways 44 and 173.

The availability of grants to the County from a number of sources is highly beneficial. State grants available for roads, housing, and infrastructure to name a few benefits the county and the communities within it. The USDA's fund availability is also beneficial to the county in similar ways. The state also acts as a funnel for other federal funds that have benefitted the local communities.

# GOALS

## Increase number of 28E agreements to increase sharing of services

The purpose of 28E agreements is to permit state and local governments in Iowa to make efficient use of their powers by enabling them to provide joint services and facilities with other agencies and to cooperate in other ways of mutual advantage. Increasing the number of these agreements within the County would allow the County and its cities to work together for a mutual advantage.

**Action Items:** - Connect organizations/jurisdictions that may benefit from service sharing

# CHAPTER TEN

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

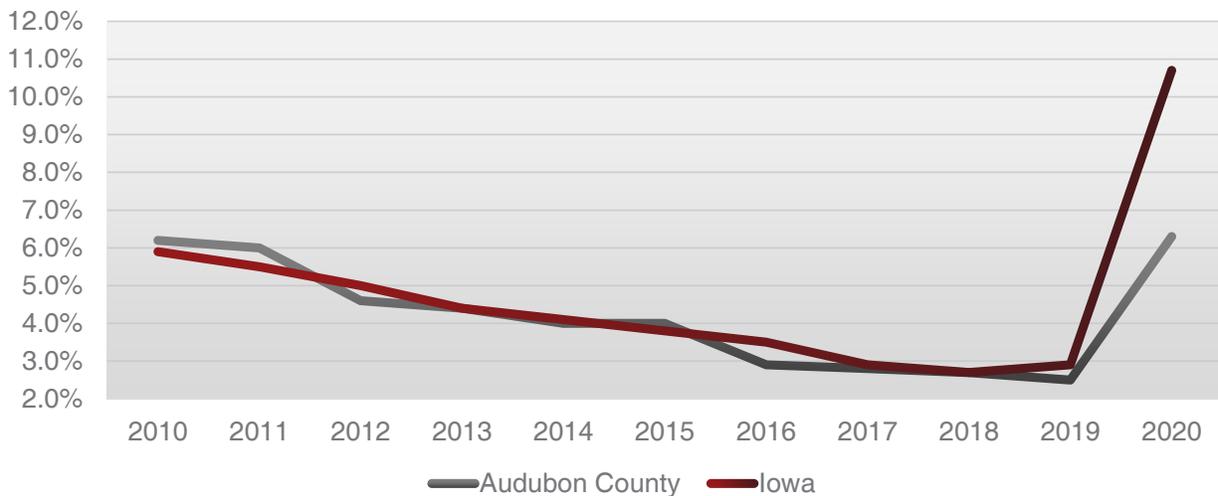


A strong economy is essential for Audubon County to grow and prosper. Understanding the county's current economic conditions is important before determining ways to increase the number of economic opportunities within the county.

## EMPLOYMENT

Audubon County's unemployment rate has continued to remain very close to the State's unemployment. Since 2010, both Audubon County and Iowa's unemployment rates have been consistently decreasing. The 2020 unemployment rate spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic which affected the employment market.

Figure 10.1: Unemployment Rates, 2010-2020



Audubon County's largest industries include educational services, health care, social assistance, agriculture, and manufacturing which is shown in Table 10.2. This information from the American Community Survey is backed by information on the largest employers in Audubon County according to Audubon County Economic Development. AMVC employs 760 full and part-time employees making it the largest employer in the county. Audubon Community Schools employs 125 full and part-time employees making it the second largest employer in the county followed by the Audubon County Hospital (110 employees). Table 10.1 shows the 17 largest employers within the county.

Table 10.1: Audubon County Largest Employers, 2020

|                               | Total Number of Employees |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| AMVC                          | 760                       |
| Audubon Community Schools     | 125                       |
| Audubon County Hospital       | 110                       |
| Waspy's                       | 97                        |
| Exira-EHK Schools             | 85                        |
| Puck Custom Enterprise        | 82                        |
| Friendship Home               | 75                        |
| Exira Care Center             | 75                        |
| Audubon County                | 68                        |
| Quality Machine               | 68                        |
| TNT                           | 21                        |
| Amanco                        | 20                        |
| Agriland FS                   | 20                        |
| AccuSteel                     | 17                        |
| Audubon State Bank            | 15                        |
| Landmands                     | 15                        |
| Pat Kaiser Christensen Motors | 12                        |

Within Audubon County, the largest industry is the educational services, and health care and social assistance industry, which employs 672 residents (23.11% of the county's employed population). The next largest industry by employment is agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining, employing 390 residents (13.41% of the county's employed populations). The complete breakdown of employment by industry is in Table 10.2.

**Table 10.2: Employment by Industry, 2018**

|  | Number | Percentage |
|--|--------|------------|
| Civilian employed population 16 years and over   | 2,908  | 100.00%    |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining                                     | 390    | 13.41%     |
| Construction   | 229    | 7.87%      |
| Manufacturing  | 311    | 10.69%     |
| Wholesale trade  | 128    | 4.40%      |
| Retail trade   | 273    | 9.39%      |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities  | 159    | 5.47%      |
| Information  | 59     | 2.03%      |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing                              | 105    | 3.61%      |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services | 120    | 4.13%      |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance                                | 672    | 23.11%     |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services:                  | 119    | 4.09%      |
| Other services, except public administration   | 215    | 7.39%      |
| Public administration  | 128    | 4.40%      |

Table 10.3 shows the employment by occupation for Audubon County Residents. The largest employers by occupation within Audubon County are careers in management, business, science, and arts occupations. These occupations employ 756 members, 26.00% of the city’s employed population. Sales and office occupations are the second largest category with 666 employees. Production, transportation, and material moving occupations are the third largest category employing 18.10% (526 employees) of Audubon County residents who are employed.

The second smallest category are the natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations category which employs just under 17 percent of the city’s employed population. The smallest occupational category within Audubon County is the service occupations. This particular information is important when considering economic and development strategies that focus on and directly benefit the overall workforce in Audubon County.

**Table 10.3: Employment by Occupational Category, 2018**

|  | Number Employed | Percent |
|--|-----------------|---------|
| Management, business, science, and arts occupations          | 756             | 26.00%  |
| Service occupations  | 471             | 16.20%  |
| Sales and office occupations                                 | 666             | 22.90%  |
| Natural Resources, construction, and maintenance occupations | 491             | 16.90%  |
| Production, transportation, and material moving occupations  | 526             | 18.10%  |

Table 10.4 shows the breakdown of employment in place for the employed residents of Audubon County in 2018. Over half of Audubon County’s working residents live and work within the county. All but 40 of the county’s residents live and work within Iowa.

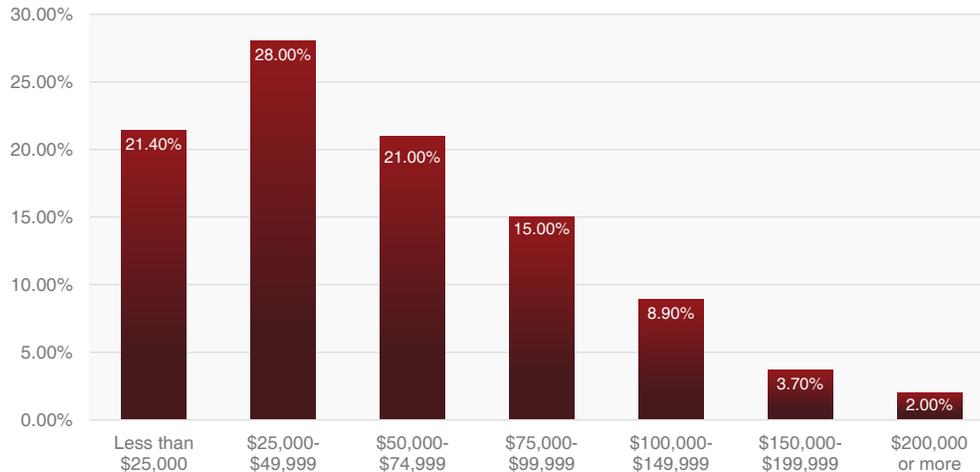
**Table 10.4: Employment by Place, 2018**

|                        | Number of Employees | Percent |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| State of Iowa          | 2,832               | 98.60%  |
| Audubon County         | 1,784               | 62.10%  |
| Outside Audubon County | 1,048               | 36.50%  |
| Outside Iowa           | 40                  | 1.40%   |

# INCOME

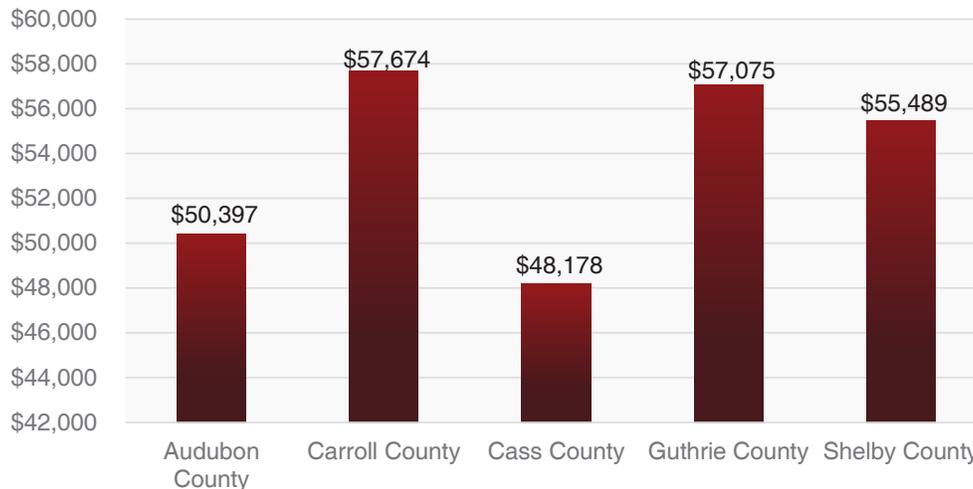
Income is another indicator of the strength of an economy within the county. The Figure 10.2 shows the distribution of the household income within the county. 28% of the county’s households make \$25,000-\$49,999 per year. In 2018, over 21 percent of the county’s households made less than \$25,000 per year. Over 14% of the county’s population makes more than \$100,000 per year.

**Figure 10.2: Audubon County Household Income, 2018**



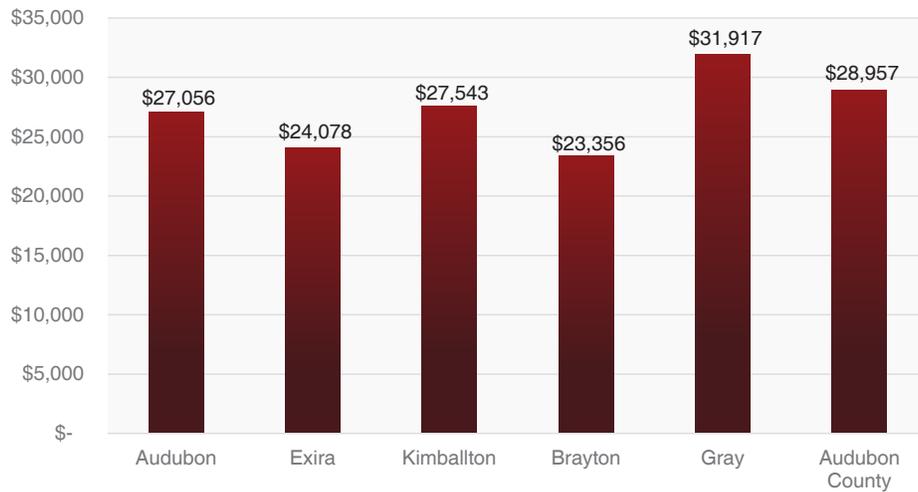
In 2010, Audubon County’s median household income was around \$42,717. Over the next eight years, the median household income increased to \$50,397, and increase of about 18%. Compared to neighboring counties, Audubon County’s median household income is the second lowest. Cass County’s median household income is the lowest of the compared counties at \$48,178. Figure 10.3 shows Audubon County’s median household income compared to four other counties which have similar population makeup and location.

**Figure 10.3: Median Household Income Comparison (County), 2018**



Per capita income, or income per person, is another way to consider income within the community. Audubon County’s per capita income in 2018 was \$28,957, up 20 percent from the per capita income of \$24,207 in 2010. Figure 10.4 shows a comparison of Audubon County to its incorporated cities.

Figure 10.4: Per Capita Income Comparison, 2018



## GOALS

### Build workforce

Creating a workforce which not only can fill the currently available positions, but is strong enough to attract new businesses is important. There is always room to improve the county's workforce and utilizing programs which are already in place will be beneficial in the advancement of the workforce.

- Action Items:**
- Offer attractive housing for new and current workers (\$100,000 to \$150,000)
  - Employers are willing to train workers
  - Create new rental properties for workers to move into

### Attract new-to-Audubon County businesses

New business start-up is recognized as a priority for economic development within the county. Attracting new businesses will assist in meeting a larger goal of population growth by providing the additional jobs needed to support a growing population. As the county and its cities work towards attracting new businesses, it is important to look for businesses that would compliment the current existing businesses.

- Action Items:**
- Explore the feasibility of installing infrastructure to Valley Business Park
  - Promote Valley Business Park for light industrial
  - Promote incentives available for new business
  - Create marketing videos of Valley Business Park
  - Market available buildings
  - Secure funding to make the business park more usable
  - Improve internet capabilities throughout the county

## Support existing businesses

Assisting existing businesses continues to be a priority for economic development throughout the County. Supporting existing local businesses is important as successful businesses will assist with the attraction of new businesses.

- Action Items:**
- Assist local businesses with expansion or other needs
  - Inform businesses of available tools and resources they can utilize
  - Encourage expansion of local businesses by offering similar incentives as new business

## Increase wage levels

Without adequate wage levels, potential employees may seek employment elsewhere. It is important that the wage levels within the county are able to support the cost of living.

- Action Items:**
- Aggressively recruit high tech, high skill companies to the area by marketing available telecommunications infrastructure, the available workforce, and the available sites

## Support those who work from home

The ever-changing business climate has shifted towards employees working remotely from their homes. This shift has caused these employees to notice a deficit in a number of services/utilities within the region. Support for these employees is vital to keep them from moving elsewhere.

- Action Items:**
- Improve internet capabilities
  - Connect to fiber where not already connected

## Secure new retail businesses

Business types within Audubon County are diverse, but there seem to be a few types that are missing. Being able to secure these additional business types would create a more complete retail environment for the County.

- Action Items:**
- Secure a farm supply store
  - Secure a men's clothing store

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

# HAZARDS



Audubon County, and its five cities adopted the Audubon County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2019. The planning process was guided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to prepare communities for potential hazards and disasters. The Audubon County Hazard Mitigation Plan is a county-wide plan which includes the cities and school districts. FEMA requires all communities be covered by an approved hazard mitigation plan before it makes certain funding available. Each hazard mitigation plan is valid for five years before an update is required. During the planning process, each city was met with individually to ensure accuracy of each section, and the county supervisors were also met with to determine the county’s path and accuracy.

The hazard mitigation planning process includes three basic steps:

- Critical Infrastructure- identify what needs to be protected and what could potentially cause a hazard or disaster
- Risk Assessment- consider what hazards could happen, how frequently they could occur, and what the damage would be
- Goals and Action Steps- what can be done to prepare and protect the community from hazards and disasters

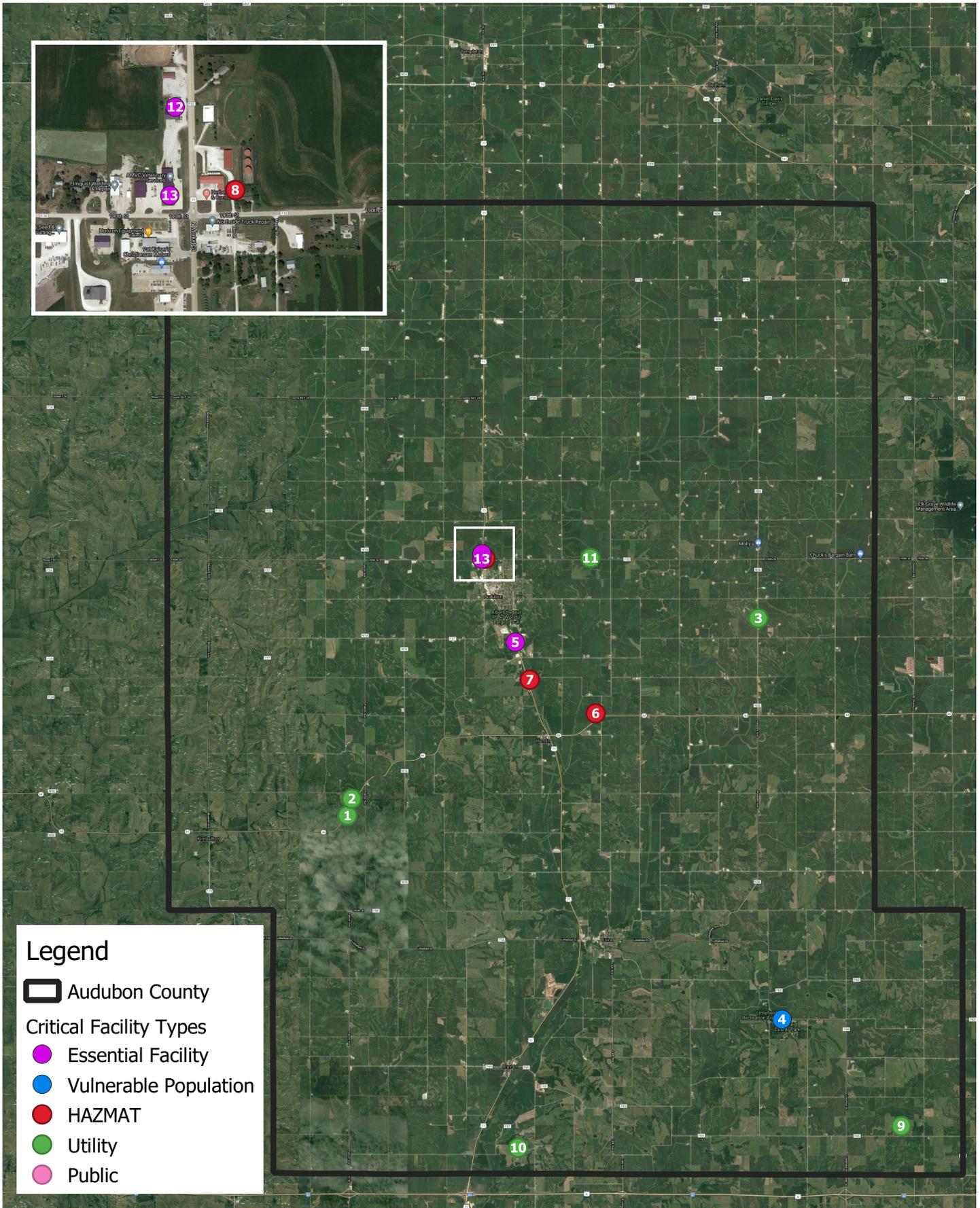
## CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The critical infrastructure identification was completed during the hazard mitigation planning process. The list includes infrastructure vital to the county. City inventories were also completed which listed infrastructure vital to the community, facilities that could be used to shelter residents from harm, as well as facilities that could pose a hazard. Table 11.1 names the critical infrastructure within the county and categorizes them into facility types. These facilities are then mapped in Map 11.1.

**Table 11.1: Audubon County Critical Infrastructure**

| <b>Number on Map</b> | <b>Name</b>                 | <b>Location</b>            | <b>Type</b>           |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                    | WCIRW Water Tower           | IA Highway 44              | Utility               |
| 2                    | Cell Tower                  | Various                    | Utility               |
| 3                    | Heartland Divide Wind Farm  | 2053 Pheasant Avenue       | Utility               |
| 4                    | Littlefield Recreation Area | 3108 Pheasant Place        | Vulnerable Population |
| 5                    | Audubon County Airport      | 2110 US-71                 | Essential Facility    |
| 6                    | Landus Cooperative          | 2287 Lark Ave              | HAZMAT                |
| 7                    | Agriland FS Audubon         | 1914 220th St              | HAZMAT                |
| 8                    | Herbers Seed                | 1898 Highway 71            | HAZMAT                |
| 9                    | Eclipse Wind Farm           | Southeast Audubon County   | Utility               |
| 10                   | Power Facility              | W of Brayton               | Utility               |
| 11                   | City of Audubon Water Plant | 270 190th Street, Audubon  | Utility               |
| 12                   | AMVC Warehouse              | N of Vet Clinic, Hwy 71    | Essential Facility    |
| 13                   | AMVC Vet Clinic             | 1797 190th Street, Audubon | Essential Facility    |

Map 11.1: Audubon County Critical Infrastructure



# RISK ASSESSMENT

The county’s hazard mitigation steering committee completed a risk assessment to rank the hazards which was then used to determine what types of projects the city should pursue. The hazards were separated into natural and human-caused hazards. Table 11.2 takes each individual risk to Audubon County and ranks them according to their hazard score which is based on if the event has happened before, if the county is likely to experience the event, the probability of the threat happening, the magnitude of the event, how much warning time would be given before the event would happen, and how long the threat would last. Table 11.3 shows the possible scores and describes the criteria used to score each hazard.

**Table 11.2: Audubon County Risk Assessment**

| Hazard                           | Previous Occurrence? | Likely to Experience? | Probability | Magnitude/ Severity | Warning Time | Duration | Hazard Score |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| Windstorm                        | Yes                  | Yes                   | 3           | 3                   | 3            | 3        | 3.00         |
| Severe Winter Storm              | Yes                  | Yes                   | 3           | 3                   | 2            | 3        | 2.85         |
| Extreme Heat                     | Yes                  | Yes                   | 3           | 2                   | 2            | 3        | 2.55         |
| River Flooding                   | Yes                  | Yes                   | 3           | 2                   | 2            | 3        | 2.55         |
| Thunderstorm/<br>Lightning/ Hail | Yes                  | Yes                   | 3           | 2                   | 3            | 1        | 2.50         |
| Drought                          | Yes                  | Yes                   | 2           | 3                   | 1            | 4        | 2.35         |
| HAZMAT Incident                  | Yes                  | Yes                   | 2           | 2                   | 4            | 2        | 2.30         |
| Flash Flood                      | Yes                  | Yes                   | 2           | 2                   | 3            | 3        | 2.25         |
| Infrastructure Failure           | Yes                  | Yes                   | 2           | 2                   | 3            | 3        | 2.25         |
| Tornado                          | Yes                  | Yes                   | 2           | 2                   | 4            | 1        | 2.20         |
| Transportation Incident          | Yes                  | Yes                   | 2           | 2                   | 4            | 1        | 2.20         |
| Human Disease                    | Yes                  | Yes                   | 2           | 2                   | 2            | 3        | 2.10         |
| Animal/Plant/Crop Disease        | Yes                  | Yes                   | 2           | 2                   | 1            | 4        | 2.05         |
| Grass/ Wildland Fire             | Yes                  | Yes                   | 1           | 2                   | 4            | 2        | 1.85         |
| Earthquake                       | No                   | No                    | 1           | 2                   | 4            | 1        | 1.75         |
| Landslide                        | Yes                  | Yes                   | 1           | 2                   | 4            | 1        | 1.75         |
| Levee/ Dam Failure               | Yes                  | Yes                   | 1           | 2                   | 3            | 2        | 1.70         |
| Expansive Soils                  | Yes                  | Yes                   | 1           | 2                   | 2            | 2        | 1.55         |

Audubon County’s highest ranking hazard is windstorms with a hazard score of 3.0. The next highest hazard is severe winter storms with a hazard score of 2.85. Both of these hazard scores have high probabilities and severity. The lowest ranking evaluated hazard was expansive soils as Audubon County is located in an area where expansive soils are not prominent.

The goals laid out in the multi-jurisdictional plan for Audubon County are to minimize damage to critical facilities, infrastructure, and other community assets from the effects of hazards; Minimize to the greatest possible extent the vulnerability of the people of Audubon County to the impacts of all identified hazards;

**Table 11.3: Risk Assessment Criteria**

| <b>Probability:</b> Likelihood of the hazard occurring again in the future considering both the hazard's historical occurrence and the projected likelihood of the hazard occurring in any given year |                    |  |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Score   | Description        |  |
| 4   | Highly Likely      | Event is probable within the calendar year.<br>History of events is greater than 33% likely per year.  |
| 3   | Likely             | Event is probable within the next three years.<br>History of events is at least 20% but less than or equal to 33% likely per year.                                   |
| 2   | Occasional         | Event is probable within the next five years.<br>History of events is at least 10% but less than or equal to 20% likely per year.                                    |
| 1   | Unlikely           | Event is possible within the next 10 years.<br>History of events is less than 10% likely per year.   |
| <b>Magnitude/Severity:</b> Assessment of severity in terms of injuries and fatalities, person property and infrastructure and the degree and extent with which the hazard affects the area            |                    |  |
| Score   | Description        |  |
| 4   | Catastrophic       | More than 50% of property severely damaged<br>Shutdown of facilities and services for more than 30 days<br>Multiple deaths   |
| 3   | Critical           | 25% to 50% of property severely damaged<br>Shutdown of facilities and services for at least 2 weeks<br>Injuries/illnesses that result in permanent disability        |
| 2   | Limited            | 10% to 25% of property severely damaged<br>Shutdown of facilities and services for more than a week<br>Injuries/illnesses that do not result in permanent disability |
| 1   | Negligible         | Less than 10% of property severely damaged<br>Shutdown of facilities and services for less than 24 hours<br>Injuries/illnesses treatable with first aid              |
| <b>Warning Time:</b> Rating of the potential (average) amount of warning time before the hazard occurs  |                    |  |
| Score   | Description        |  |
| 4   | Less than 6 hours  |  |
| 3   | 6 to 12 hours      |  |
| 2   | 12 to 24 hours     |  |
| 1   | More than 24 hours |  |
| <b>Duration:</b> A measure of the duration of time that the hazard will affect the area<br>Ex. a snowstorm will likely last several hours, whereas a lightning strike would last less than a second   |                    |  |
| Score   | Description        |  |
| 4   | More than 1 week   |  |
| 3   | Less than 1 week   |  |
| 2   | Less than 1 day    |  |
| 1   | Less than 6 hours  |  |

Improve coordination, communication, and response operations with other relevant organizations; and improve public communication, education, and awareness of hazards and their risks in Audubon County. These goals will help steer the county with hazard planning as well as comprehensive planning as these goals affect the safety of all residents and visitors to Audubon County.

## GOALS

Minimize damage to critical facilities, infrastructure, and other community assets from the effects of hazards

Being able to minimize the damage to the critical facilities, infrastructure, and other assets will reduce the amount of clean-up and financial assistance necessary post-hazard event. This will help with reducing utility outages. It will also help protect structure which house important records of the County and its cities.

- Action Items:**
- Encourage regular inspection of critical facilities
  - Maintain a 24/7 directory of critical facility contacts
  - Participate in buy-out projects when available

## Minimize to the greatest possible extent the vulnerability of the people of Audubon County to the impacts of all identified hazards

Protection of the lives of the residents of Audubon County is the most important goal. Ensuring that all residents of the county are protected to the fullest extent possible during a hazard event is the primary goal, and there are a number of ways that the county can assist in the protection of its people.

- Action Items:**
- Establish a list of homebound/special needs population
  - Community drills
  - Build a saferoom at Littlefield
  - Train/coordinate surrounding communities for confined space extrication
  - Obtain/purchase needed supplies/equipment for confined space extrication
  - Alert system for Littlefield Recreation Area
  - Update the wireless radio system and dispatcher room
  - Implement reverse 911
  - Train general public where to go for information

## Improve coordination, communication, and response operations with other relevant organizations

Working together in the event of a hazard can allow organizations to spread out and cover a larger area, protecting more people, infrastructure, and assets from damage. Working to improve the communication and coordination between relevant organizations will allow for a quicker, more unified response.

- Action Items:**
- Develop HAZMAT resource contacts within the county and with other counties
  - Write down county's action in case of emergency (what is the county doing and what should the others do)
  - Public safety radio for conservation officer
  - Encourage joint training exercises
  - Coordinate flood control efforts with landowners and county road departments
  - Update emergency communication equipment
  - Develop/educate on bomb threat response protocol and ensure school staff, county staff, Sheriff and all other applicable parties understand the response chain and protocols
  - Join a HAZMAT group to improve response time and reliability

## Improve public communication, education, and awareness of hazards and their risks in Audubon County

Informing the public about the hazards they are susceptible to will allow them to create their own plans to respond in the event of a hazard. Having a more prepared public will help minimize the effects hazards have on the county.

- Action Items:**
- Instruct homebound people to develop a plan for severe weather events
  - Acquire NOAA weather radios for selected businesses and residents
  - Acquire additional radios when funding is available

## Complete structural projects that will prevent and improve the response to hazards

Structural projects can be utilized in a number of ways. Certain projects can reduce the effects that hazards will have on a community (ex- floodwalls), others create a location for communities to gather in response to a hazard (saferoom). These projects can help a community recover quicker from a hazard event.

- Action Items:**
- Create a Emergency Operations Center for the county and response committee to operate out of after a hazard event
  - Replace high priority levees/dams



# CHAPTER TWELVE

# LAND USE



# Existing Land Use

The existing land use map shows how land use within Audubon County is currently being utilized. Land use does not necessarily reflect the current zoning designation or the desired future land use pattern. Land use categories in Audubon County include agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, incorporated cities, and parks and open space.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Audubon County has an area of 443 square miles or 283,520 acres. The breakdown by land use category can be found in table 12.1 below. It is important to note that these numbers are approximate and classifications from the Audubon County Assessor were the determining factor.

**Table 12.1: Land Use**

| Land Use             | Approximate Acres |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Agriculture          | 280,843           |
| Residential          | 1,164             |
| Commercial           | 515               |
| Industrial           | 100               |
| Parks and Open Space | 898               |

## Agriculture

Agriculture land use is the largest land use within Audubon County. Agricultural lands make up 90% of the county's total acreage. When looking towards the future, land that is dedicated towards agriculture is expected largely to remain agricultural. On a small scale, some land may be developed into residential or industrial properties, but the number of acres anticipated to be changed is modest.

Audubon County currently has several niche farming operations and these operations help diversify not only the agriculture economy, but the county's economy as a whole. Registered with Audubon County, there are eight beekeepers, ten organic crop operations including vegetables, one vineyard, and one evergreen tree farm (Christmas Trees).

## Residential

Residential lands are the second largest land use within Audubon County. Residential lands include any land within the county, outside of city limits, that has a residential structure located on it. A large portion of this land classification comes from the communities of Hamlin and Ross with the remaining acres being residential properties throughout the county. Residential structures which are on the same property as farming operations are not classified as residential, instead they are included in the agriculture classification.

## Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces make up the third largest land use within the county. Littlefield Recreation Area makes up approximately 44% of this land use classification. The remaining land in this classification is land dedicated to the T-Bone Trail, parks in Hamlin and Ross, and other smaller county-owned land parcels.

## Commercial

Rural commercial lands make up the second smallest land classification within Audubon County. Companies including AMVC, Puck Enterprises, and LANDUS Cooperative own land and operate within this land use. These companies are located throughout the county.

## Industrial

Industrial lands in rural Audubon County make up the smallest land use classification. Some of these industries are located along Highway 71 just south of the City of Audubon, and others are spread throughout the county.

## GOALS

### Utilize land use patterns to allow for niche farming within the county

Niche farming can include a variety of farming types from organic, to tree, to apiculture and everything in between. Allowing for these establishments to locate within the county creates an environment which encourages residents to pursue entrepreneurial desires.

- Action Items:**
- When examining current land use for future land use changes, recognize niche farming operations and ensure that future land use patterns will not be a detriment to their operations
  - Ensure land use patterns allow for the creation of additional niche farming operations



# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# IMPLEMENTATION



The final step in the comprehensive planning process is to consider how the goals will be implemented. The specific action goals laid out in each chapter are the first step in determining how the goals will be implemented. Also important is who will be responsible for implementing those actions, how the actions will be funded, and what the time frame will be for completing the action items. The following list does not prioritize actions, but provides guidance on what projects and actions should be considered. As the cities and county discusses future budgets and strategic planning updates, it is recommended that this portion of the plan be reviewed.

The following pages involve an implementation matrix. The goals and action items are laid out in each chapter. The matrix is to be used for implementing the action items. The goals are listed along with action items. Responsible parties are indicated as well as what funding is available to assist with completing each individual action item within the specified time frame.

Time frame options are:

- On-going: actions that will be continual; may already be underway or will begin shortly
- Short: actions that will be completed within three years
- Mid: actions that will be completed in three to five years
- Long: actions that will take at least five years to complete.
- TBD: On an as needed basis, or will be determined by other factors at an unforeseeable date

## HOUSING GOALS

| Goal  | Action   | Responsible Party                        | Funding Source   | Time Frame |
|---|--|--|--|------------|
| Explore options to improve existing housing stock | Address abandoned/vacant homes   | Cities, Audubon County                   | City, County, Private, Local State and Federal Grants  | Ongoing    |
|   | Utilize CDBG funds for current home rehabilitations                              | Cities, Audubon County, Region XII       | City, County, Private, Local and State Grants  | Ongoing    |
|   | Encourage residents to utilize down-payment assistance for first-time homebuyers | Cities, Audubon County, Region XII, USDA | City, County, Local Grants and Loans, State Grants and Loans, Private                          | Ongoing    |
| Expand housing options for seniors                | Explore options catered towards elderly married couples                          | Cities, Audubon County, Region XII       | City, County, Local Grants and Loans, State Grants and Loans, Federal Grants and Loan, Private | Short      |
|   | Duplexes/triplexes with some amenities taken care of would be optimal            | Cities, Audubon County, Region XII       | City, County, Local Grants and Loans, State Grants and Loans, Federal Grants and Loan, Private | Short      |

| Goal  | Action  | Responsible Party                                       | Funding Source  | Time Frame   |
|---|---|---|---|--------------|
|   | Explore building duplexes/triplexes in Audubon and Exira                                  | Cities, Audubon County, Region XII                      | City, County, Local Grants and Loans, State Grants and Loans, Federal Grants and Loan, Private  | Short        |
| Ensure all residents are informed about available grant and loan programs | Make cities aware that some programs require the city to apply before funds are available | Region XII, Audubon County Economic Development, Cities | Program Match from Cities, County   | Short        |
|   | Spread information about income requirements and other program requirements               | Cities, Region XII, Audubon County Economic Development | None  | Ongoing      |
|   | Inform residents of the process to apply for and receive funds                            | Region XII, ACED, USDA                                  | None  | Ongoing      |
| Address the need for new homes (either spec or custom builds)             | Secure financial backing to build/purchase a spec home builds)                            | Developer, City, County                                 | Private   | Short        |
|   | Ensure potential lot locations are buildable  | County & Cities   | City, County  | Short        |
|   | Start with building any number and continue as long as demand allows                      | Cities, Developers, Region XII                          | City, County, Private, Local Grants and Loans, State Grants and Loans, Federal Grants and Loans | Mid          |
|   | Utilize available programs through IEDA and IFA to encourage new builds                   | ACED, Audubon County, Region XII                        | City, County, Private, Local Grants and Loans, State Grants and Loans, Federal Grants and Loans | Mid          |
|   | Examine the potential usage of the Homes for Iowa program to secure new builds            | Cities, Audubon County, ACED, Region XII                | City, County, Private   | Short to Mid |
|   | Utilize infill lots in all communities  | Cities  | Private Funds   | Ongoing      |

| Goal   | Action  | Responsible Party                                       | Funding Source  | Time Frame  |
|--|---|---|---|-------------|
|  | Investigate infill lot requirements to encourage construction on those lots, and when necessary, work with the City to address potential barriers to construction | Cities  | City  | Short       |
| Address the need for additional rental housing | Construct duplexes/ triplexes with maintenance of the property and building provided  | ACED, Region XII  | City, County, Private, Local Grants and Loans, State Grants and Loans | Mid to Long |
|  | Connect infrastructure to potential buildable lots  | Cities, Audubon County, Rural Water, Telecommunications | City, County, State Grants and Loans, Federal Grants and Loans        | Mid to Long |
| Encourage creation of buildable lots           | Create rural subdivisions   | Audubon County  | County  | Mid         |
|  | Create empty lots that will allow for construction within the county  | Cities, Audubon County                                  | City, County, Local Grants  | Ongoing     |

## PARKS AND CULTURE GOALS

| Goal                               | Action   | Responsible Party   | Funding Source  | Time Frame |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|------------|
| Maintain existing facilities       | Budget for and staff facilities  | Audubon County Conservation, Audubon County               | Revenue from County Parks, Grants, Private Donations, Public      | Ongoing    |
| Pursue additional amenities        | Consider general outdoor activities such as frisbee golf course as funding becomes available | Audubon County Conservation                               | Grants, Private Donations, Revenue from Campgrounds, Public Funds | Short      |
|                                    | Consider additional trail locations and activities along the trail                           | Audubon County Conservation, Cities, ACED                 | Public, Local State and Federal Grants, Private Donations         | Short      |
|                                    | Consider additional locations for campgrounds  | Audubon County Conservation                               | Public  | Short      |
| Highlight Audubon County's History | Choose venues to showcase historical information   | Audubon County Historical Society, Cities, Audubon County | Private Donations, Grants, Public                                 | Short      |

| Goal | Action   | Responsible Party   | Funding Source  | Time Frame |
|------|--|---|---|------------|
|      | Continue to promote and safeguard the county's historic properties | Audubon County Historical Society, Audubon County Tourism             | Private Donations, Grants, Public                               | Ongoing    |
|      | Find resources to preserve historic buildings/sites                | Audubon County Historical Society, Audubon County Tourism, Region XII | Grants, Public, Private Donations                               | Ongoing    |
|      | Promote future museum/cultural center development                  | Audubon County Historical Society, Audubon County Tourism             | City, County, Private Donations, Local State and Federal Grants | Long       |

## TRANSPORTATION GOALS

| Goal  | Action   | Responsible Party                               | Funding Source | Time Frame                   |
|---|--|---|----------------|------------------------------|
| Maintain existing transportation infrastructure | Redo/expand 7th Avenue in the City of Audubon  | City of Audubon                                 | City           | As funding becomes available |
|   | Rehabilitation of East Division Street in the City of Audubon  | City of Audubon                                 | City           | As funding becomes available |
|   | Repave all streets in the City of Kimballton   | City of Kimballton, State of Iowa (IA 44 & 173) | City           | As funding becomes available |
|   | Repave all streets in the City of Gray   | City of Gray, Audubon County                    | City           | As funding becomes available |
|   | Improvements to F58 (Littlefield Drive) to and through Exira   | Audubon County, City of Exira                   | City, County   | Mid                          |
|   | Resurface County T west out of the City of Brayton   | Audubon County, City of Brayton                 | County         | Mid                          |
|   | The through streets in Audubon (S Division, E Division, NW Division) need repaved due to the current pavement buckling | City of Audubon                                 | City           | As funding becomes available |
|   | Grade county gravel roads on a regular basis   | Audubon County Secondary Roads                  | County         | Ongoing                      |

| Goal  | Action   | Responsible Party   | Funding Source                            | Time Frame  |
|---|--|---|---|-------------|
|   | Pavement improvements at the intersection of M66 & 100th Street by Puck Enterprises                            | Audubon County  | County                                    | Mid to Long |
|   | Rehabilitation to a large number of Kimballton sidewalks   | City of Kimballton, Kimballton Property Owners                                  | City, Private                             | Short       |
|   | Rehabilitation of the City of Audubon's sidewalks  | City of Audubon, Audubon Property Owners  | City, Private                             | Short       |
|   | Brayton bridge rehabilitation/conversion to culvert  | City of Brayton, Audubon County   | City, County                              | Mid to Long |
|   | Continue to inspect county bridges and develop a schedule to ensure maintenance and replacement when necessary | Audubon County, Cities, Audubon County Secondary Roads, Audubon County Engineer | State, County                             | Ongoing     |
|   | F32 widening & resurfacing   | Audubon County  |   |             |
|   | East Side Drive to Mockingbird around cemetery in Exira upgrades and paving                                    | City of Exira   | City                                      | TBD         |
| Expand existing transportation infrastructure | Expand Industrial Road South in the City of Audubon  | City of Audubon   | City                                      | TBD         |
|   | Pave South Division Street West (200th Street)   | Audubon County, City of Audubon   | City, County                              | TBD         |
|   | Pave 130th Street west of US Highway 71 for the first mile towards Handlos Feed Mill                           | Audubon County  | County                                    | TBD         |
|   | Widen county roads where needed to improve transportation flow or safety                                       | Audubon County  | County                                    | TBD         |
|   | Extend 100th Street  | Audubon County  | County                                    | TBD         |
|   | Sidewalk connections for Exira Elementary  | City of Exira, Exira-EHK School   | Safe Routes to School Grant, Public Funds | Short       |
|   | Sidewalk connections for Audubon Community Schools   | City of Audubon, Audubon Community Schools                                      | Safe Routes to School Grant, Public Funds | Short       |
|   | Construct/Expand the long-term/usable parking in Audubon's downtown  | City of Audubon   | City                                      | Short       |

| Goal                           | Action  | Responsible Party   | Funding Source  | Time Frame   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|--------------|
|                                | Pave/Expand 190th Street (industrial zoning)                            | Audubon County  | County  | TBD          |
|                                | Pave the intersection of 44 and Lark to Landus Cooperative              | Audubon County  | County  | TBD          |
| Transportation Enhancements    | Execute the Highway 71 corridor plan and carry it throughout the county | Audubon County, City of Audubon, City of Exira  | Grants, City, County  | Short to Mid |
| Trail Enhancement/Continuation | Repave the Exira Trail Extension  | Audubon County Conservation, Audubon County Supervisors                                 | Grants, City, County, Private                                   | TBD          |
|                                | Continue trail to Ross then up to Gray                                  | Audubon County Conservation, Audubon County Supervisors                                 | Grants, City, County, Private                                   | TBD          |
|                                | Finish trail connections to Cass County and the surrounding trails      | Audubon County Conservation, Audubon County Supervisors                                 | Grants, City, Audubon County, Cass County, Private              | TBD          |
|                                | Resurface trail where needed  | Audubon County Conservation, Audubon County Supervisors, Audubon County Tourism         | Grants, City, County, Private                                   | TBD          |
|                                | Upgrade trailheads to make them stand out and be attractive             | Audubon County Conservation, Audubon County Supervisors, Audubon County Tourism, Cities | Local and State Grants, Private Donations, City, County         | Short        |
|                                | Pave portions of the trail where it is currently gravel                 | Audubon County Conservation, Audubon County Supervisors, Audubon County Tourism, Cities | Local State and Federal Grants, Private Donations, City, County | Short        |
|                                | Create points of interest along the trail with lighting/art/signage     | Audubon County Tourism, Audubon County Conservation                                     | State and Local Grants, Private Donations, City, County         | Short        |
|                                | Install mile markers along the trail to utilize in case of emergency    | Audubon County Conservation   | Local Grants, Private Donations, City, County                   | Short        |

# INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

| Goal                               | Action  | Responsible Party                  | Funding Source                                   | Time Frame   |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Maintain/Upgrade Existing Services | In Kimballton, inspect then slip line and/or replace sewer mains as found necessary   | City of Kimballton                 | City, CDBG, SRF, USDA                            | As Necessary |
|                                    | In Kimballton, inspect then slip line and/or replace storm sewer mains as found necessary   | City of Kimballton                 | City, CDBG, SRF, USDA                            | As Necessary |
|                                    | In Audubon, rehabilitate manholes   | City of Audubon                    | City   | Ongoing      |
|                                    | In Audubon, replace fire hydrants which do not meet current standards   | City of Audubon                    | City   | Ongoing      |
|                                    | In Audubon, replace water valves as necessary   | City of Audubon                    | City   | Ongoing      |
|                                    | In Audubon, install a larger water main(s) heading south from the city  | City of Audubon                    | City, State and Federal Grant/Loans              | Short        |
|                                    | Work with Windstream to provide upgrades to the internet services within the County   | Audubon County, Windstream         | Private  | Short        |
|                                    | Eastern Audubon County has internet connectivity issues, work with providers to reduce these issues                                   | Audubon County, Internet Providers | Private  | Short        |
|                                    | In Kimballton, upgrade the electricity generation, transformers, and bury remaining power lines for the City-owned electrical utility | City of Kimballton                 | Utility Revenue                                  | Short        |
|                                    | In all communities and the county, acquire back-up generators to provide power for essential facilities                               | Audubon County, Cities             | City, Local Grants, State Grants, Federal Grants | Short        |
|                                    | In Audubon, seek additional locations for new city well and fund project to construct the new well                                    | City of Audubon, Audubon County    | City, State and Federal Grants                   | Short        |

| Goal  | Action   | Responsible Party   | Funding Source  | Time Frame   |
|---|--|---|---|--------------|
| Expand Current Service Areas                          | Extend services to the outskirts of the communities to allow for additional housing developments | Audubon County, Cities, Private Companies   | City, County, Private   | Mid          |
|   | In Audubon, extend water main south to AMANCO  | City of Audubon   | City, Federal Grants, State Grants, Loans                       | Short to Mid |
|   | In Audubon, expand sewer and water service to and outside city limits                            | City of Audubon   | City  | Short to Mid |
| Complete Upgrades to Emergency Service Infrastructure | Install additional towers to provide service to previously “dead” areas                          | Audubon County Emergency Management, Audubon County Supervisors, Audubon County Sheriff   | County, City, State, Federal Grants, State Grants, Local Grants | Short to Mid |
|   | Install additional repeaters to decrease issues with radio communication                         | Audubon County Emergency Management, Audubon County Supervisors, Audubon County Sheriff   | County, City, State, Federal Grants, State Grants, Local Grants | Short to Mid |
|   | Equip all agencies with the necessary radios, including County Engineer’s Office                 | Audubon County Emergency Management, Audubon County Engineer, Audubon County Conservation | County, City, State, Federal Grants, State Grants, Local Grants | Short to Mid |

# COMMUNITY FACILITY GOALS

| Goal   | Action   | Responsible Party   | Funding Source                        | Time Frame |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Develop plans for health care provider recruitment | Coordinate with health care providers                          | ACED, Audubon County Memorial Hospital                        | None                                  | Ongoing    |
|  | Meet the needs of the community                                | ACED, Audubon County Memorial Hospital                        | Private                               | Ongoing    |
|  | Ensure needed services are available within the county         | ACED, Audubon County Memorial Hospital                        | Local Incentives                      | Short      |
|  | Explore next steps for healthcare professionals                | ACED, Audubon County Memorial Hospital, Medical Professionals | Local Incentives                      | Ongoing    |
| Ensure Daycare needs are met                       | Attract licensed daycares to the communities within the county | ACED, Schools, Cities   | Economic Development/Local Incentives | Short      |
|  | Attract in-home daycares to the communities within the county  | Cities, ACED  | Economic Development/Local Incentives | Short      |
|  | Assist daycares in attracting staff                            | ACED  | Economic Development/Local Incentives | Short      |
| Develop plans for teacher recruitment              | Coordinate with school systems to determine teacher needs      | Audubon Community Schools, Exira-EHK Schools, ACED            | None                                  | Short      |
|  | Assist the schools when possible to help meet their needs      | Audubon Community Schools, Exira-EHK Schools, ACED            | County, City                          | As Needed  |

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION GOALS

| Goal  | Action   | Responsible Party  | Funding Source | Time Frame |
|---|--|--|----------------|------------|
| Increase number of 28E agreements to increase sharing of services | Connect organizations/ jurisdictions that may benefit from service sharing | Audubon County, Audubon County Secondary Roads, Audubon County Engineer, Partner Organizations | None           | Ongoing    |

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

| Goal                                     | Action   | Responsible Party                                     | Funding Source                           | Time Frame   |
|--|--|---|--|--------------|
| Build workforce                          | Offer attractive housing for new and current workers (\$100,000 to \$150,000)          | ACED, Cities, Local Developers, Region XII            | Private Investment, Grants, Public       | Short        |
|  | Employers are willing to train workers   | Employers   | Private, Grants                          | Ongoing      |
|  | Create new rental properties for workers to move into                                  | ACED, Cities, Local Developers, Region XII, Employers | Private Investment, Grants, City, County | Short to Mid |
| Attract new-to-Audubon County businesses | Explore the feasibility of installing infrastructure to Valley Business Park           | ACED, Audubon County, WIAD                            | Grants, Private Investment, City, County | Short to Mid |
|  | Promote Valley Business Park for light industrial                                      | ACED, Audubon County, WIAD                            | Grants, Private Investment, City, County | Ongoing      |
|  | Promote incentives available for new business  | ACED, Audubon County, WIAD                            | Grants, Private Investment, City, County | Short        |
|  | Create marketing videos of Valley Business Park  | ACED, Audubon County                                  | Grants, Private Investment, City, County | Short        |
|  | Market available buildings   | ACED, Audubon County, WIAD                            | Grants, Private Investment, City, County | Short        |
|  | Secure funding to make the business park more usable                                   | ACED, Audubon County                                  | Grants, Private Investment, City, County | Short to Mid |
|  | Improve internet capabilities throughout the county                                    | ACED, Audubon County, Region XII                      | Grants, Private Investment, City, County | Short        |
| Support Existing Businesses              | Assist local businesses with expansion or other needs                                  | ACED  | Private Investment, Loans                | Ongoing      |
|  | Inform businesses of available tools and resources they can utilize                    | ACED  | Private Investment, Loans                | Ongoing      |
|  | Encourage expansion of local businesses by offering similar incentives as new business | ACED  | Private Investment, Loans                | Ongoing      |

| Goal                             | Action  | Responsible Party                          | Funding Source            | Time Frame   |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|--------------|
| Increase wage levels             | Aggressively recruit high tech, high skill companies to the area by marketing available telecommunications infrastructure, the available workforce, and the available sites | ACED, Audubon County, WIAD                 | Local Incentives          | Ongoing      |
| Support those who work from home | Improve internet capabilities   | Audubon County, Private Internet Providers | Private                   | Short        |
|                                  | Connect to fiber where not already connected  | Private Internet Providers                 | Private                   | Short        |
| Secure new retail businesses     | Secure a farm supply store  | ACED, Cities, Audubon County               | Local Incentives, Private | Short to Mid |
|                                  | Secure a men's clothing store   | ACED, Cities, Audubon County               | Local Incentives, Private | Short to Mid |

## HAZARD GOALS

| Goal   | Action  | Responsible Party  | Funding Source                               | Time Frame   |
|--|---|--|--|--------------|
| Minimize damage to critical facilities, infrastructure, and other community assets from the effects of hazards             | Encourage regular inspection of critical facilities     | Audubon County Emergency Management, Audubon County Engineer, Audubon County Supervisors | City, County                                 | Ongoing      |
|  | Maintain a 24/7 directory of critical facility contacts | Audubon County Emergency Management  | None   | Ongoing      |
|  | Participate in buy-out projects when available          | Audubon County Supervisors, Cities   | City, County, Local State and Federal Grants | As Available |
| Minimize to the greatest extent the vulnerability of the people of Audubon County to the impacts of all identified hazards | Establish a list of homebound/special needs population  | Audubon County Public Health, Elderbridge Agency on Aging, New Opportunities             | None   | Short        |

| Goal   | Action   | Responsible Party  | Funding Source                               | Time Frame    |
|--|--|--|--|---------------|
|  | Community drills   | Audubon County, Cities   | City, County                                 | As Needed     |
|  | Build a saferoom at Littlefield  | Audubon County Conservation  | County, Local State and Federal Grants       | Mid           |
|  | Train/coordinate surrounding communities for confined space extrication                              | Audubon County Emergency Management, County Fire Departments, County EMS                     | City, County, Local and State Grants         | As Applicable |
|  | Obtain/purchase needed supplies/equipment for confined space extrication                             | Audubon County Sheriff, Audubon County Fire Departments                                      | City, County, Local State and Federal Grants | Short         |
|  | Alert system for Littlefield Recreation Area   | Audubon County Conservation  | County, Local State and Federal Grants       | Short         |
|  | Update the wireless radio system and dispatcher room   | Audubon County 911, Audubon County Sheriff, Audubon County Fire Departments                  | City, County, Local State and Federal Grants | Short         |
|  | Implement reverse 911  | Audubon County 911   | City, County, Local State and Federal Grants | Mid           |
|  | Train general public on where to go for information  | Audubon County Emergency Management, Audubon County Sheriff, Audubon County Fire Departments | None   | Short         |
| Improve coordination, communication, and response operations with other relevant organizations | Develop HAZMAT resource contacts within the County and with other counties                           | Audubon County EMA, Audubon County Fire Departments, HAZMAT Contacts                         | None   | Ongoing       |
|  | Write down county's action in case of emergency (what is the county doing and what should others do) | Audubon County EMA   | None   | Short         |
|  | Public safety radio for conservation officer   | Audubon County Conservation, Audubon County Emergency Management                             | County, Local and State Grants               | Short         |

| Goal  | Action  | Responsible Party  | Funding Source  | Time Frame   |
|---|---|--|---|--------------|
|   | Encourage joint training exercises  | Audubon County Fire Departments, Audubon county Emergency Management, Audubon County EMS         | City  | As Possible  |
|   | Coordinate flood control efforts with landowners and county road departments  | Private Land Owners, Audubon County Secondary Roads  | County, Private   | Ongoing      |
|   | Update emergency communication equipment  | Audubon County Emergency Management, Audubon County, EMS, Fire Departments                       | City, County, Private Donations, Local State and Federal Grants | Mid          |
|   | Develop/educate on bomb threat response protocol and ensure school staff, county staff, Sheriff, and all other applicable parties understand the response chain and protocols | Audubon County Sheriff, Audubon County Schools   | City, County, School  | Short        |
|   | Join a HAZMAT group to improve response time and reliability  | Audubon County Emergency Management, Audubon County Supervisors, Audubon County Fire Departments | City and County   | Short        |
| Improve public communication, education, and awareness of hazards and their risks in Audubon County | Instruct homebound people to develop a plan for severe weather events   | Audubon County Emergency Management, New Opportunities, Elderbridge Agency on Aging              | None  | Short        |
|   | Acquire NOAA weather radios for selected businesses and residents   | Audubon County Emergency Management  | Grants  | As Available |
|   | Acquire additional radios when funding is available   | Audubon County Emergency Management  | Grants  | As Available |

| Goal   | Action   | Responsible Party                              | Funding Source                                      | Time Frame  |
|--|--|--|---|-------------|
| Complete structural projects that will prevent and improve the response to hazards | Create an Emergency Operations Center for the county and response committee to operate out of after a hazard event | Audubon County EMA, Audubon County Supervisors | City, County, State, Local State and Federal Grants | Mid to Long |
|  | Replace high priority levees/dams  | Audubon County Engineer, Iowa DOT              | County, State, State Grants                         | As needed   |



# APPENDIX A

# SWOT ANALYSIS



# Strengths

Audubon Co Fairgrounds  
Audubon County Hospital & Exira Medical Clinic  
Audubon Golf Course, Littlefield Lake Recreation area, Bike trail  
Audubon Rec Center  
Central location (Des Moines/Omaha & 30 mins for others)  
Churches  
Exira Event Center  
Family farms  
Friendship Home, Exira Care Center, & Children's Nest  
Great fire & law enforcement relations  
Job availability  
Low Crime  
Opportunity for community involvement/volunteering  
Organizations--Lions, 100 Women Who Care, Cancer Soc. and more  
Quality School System  
Schools & Libraries  
Small businesses  
Some hard-working, involved younger people

# Weaknesses

Communities not willing to change for growth  
Community friction between communities in the county  
Declining population  
Housing (2)  
Lack of good wi-fi, broadband, internet, cell phone reception  
Low-paying jobs/low average incomes  
Outdated infrastructure  
Reluctance to welcome and accept newcomers  
Small area compared to most counties  
Small tax base, limits spending

# Opportunities

Beautification of all towns--clean up unsightly homes, empty storefronts,  
Former West Central properties to be developed  
Population attraction (jobs willing to train)  
Room to grow  
Support local businesses  
Wind towers bringing tax funds

# Threats

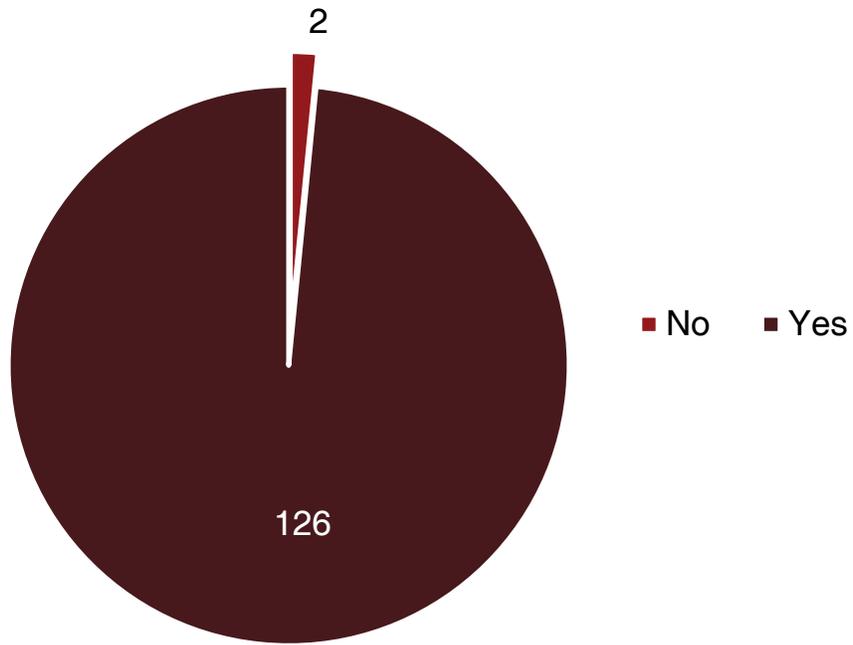
Afraid of change, don't want to be like the big cities  
Business here can't find and keep good employees  
Difficulty for the small family farmer to make a living  
Divisiveness

# APPENDIX B

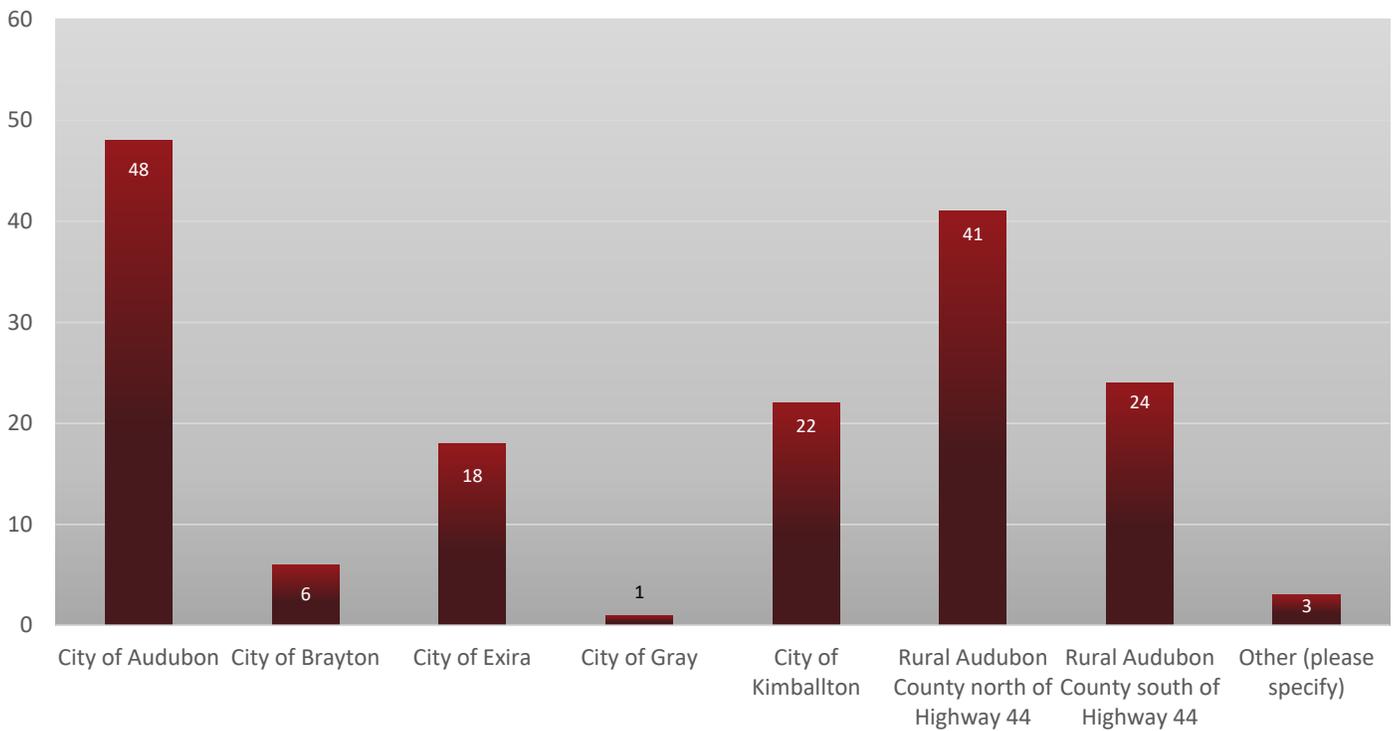
# COMMUNITY SURVEY



### Q.1: Do you live in Audubon County?

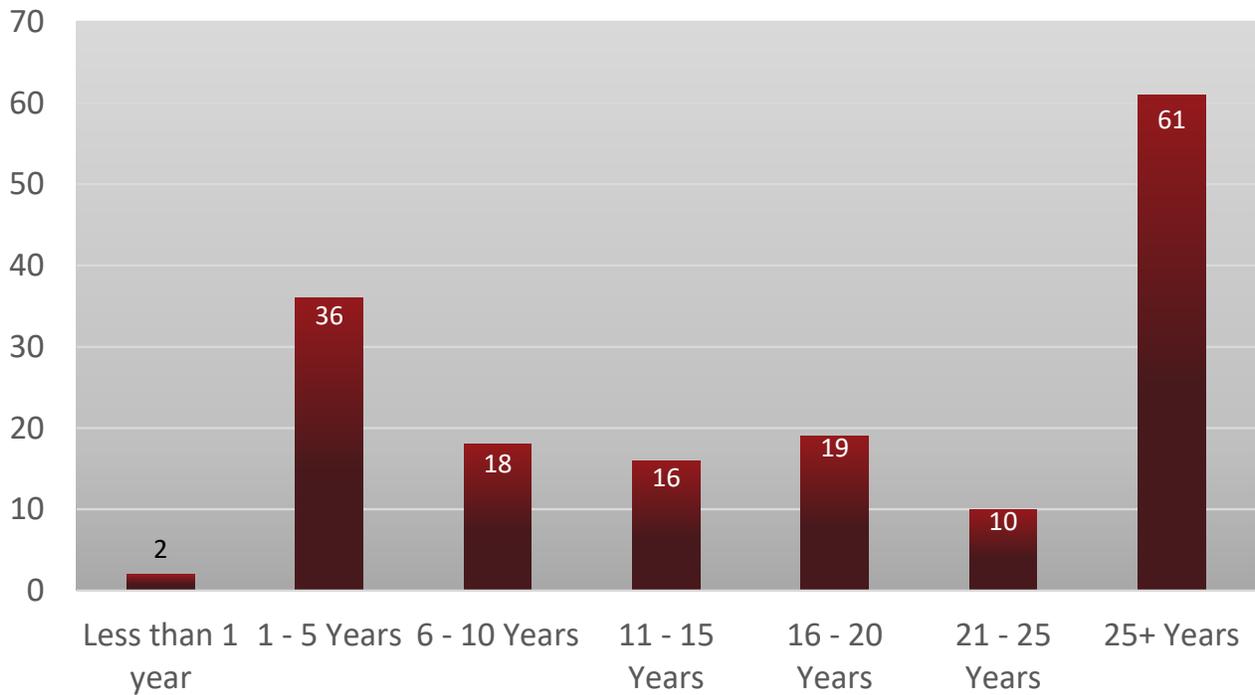


### Q.2: Where do you live?

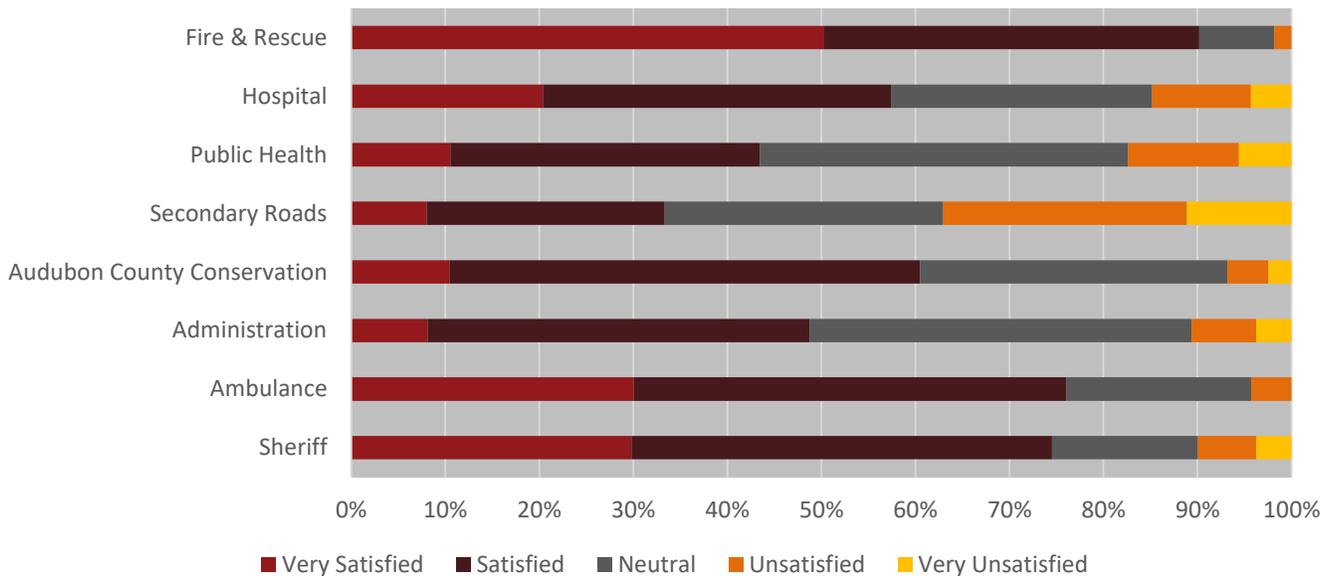


Other Responses: Rural Brayton, West of Exira, Carroll

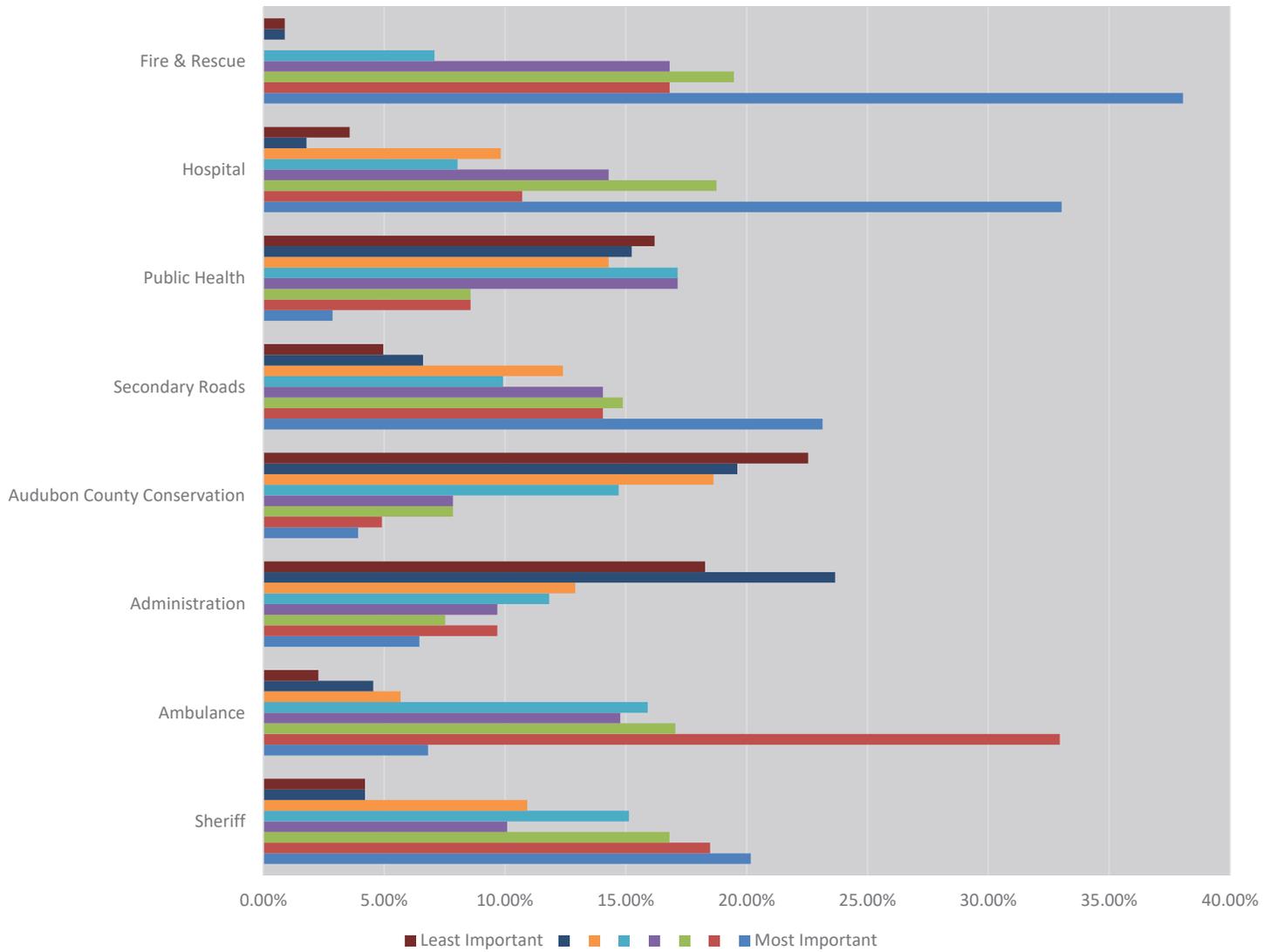
**Q.3: How long have you lived in your current location?**



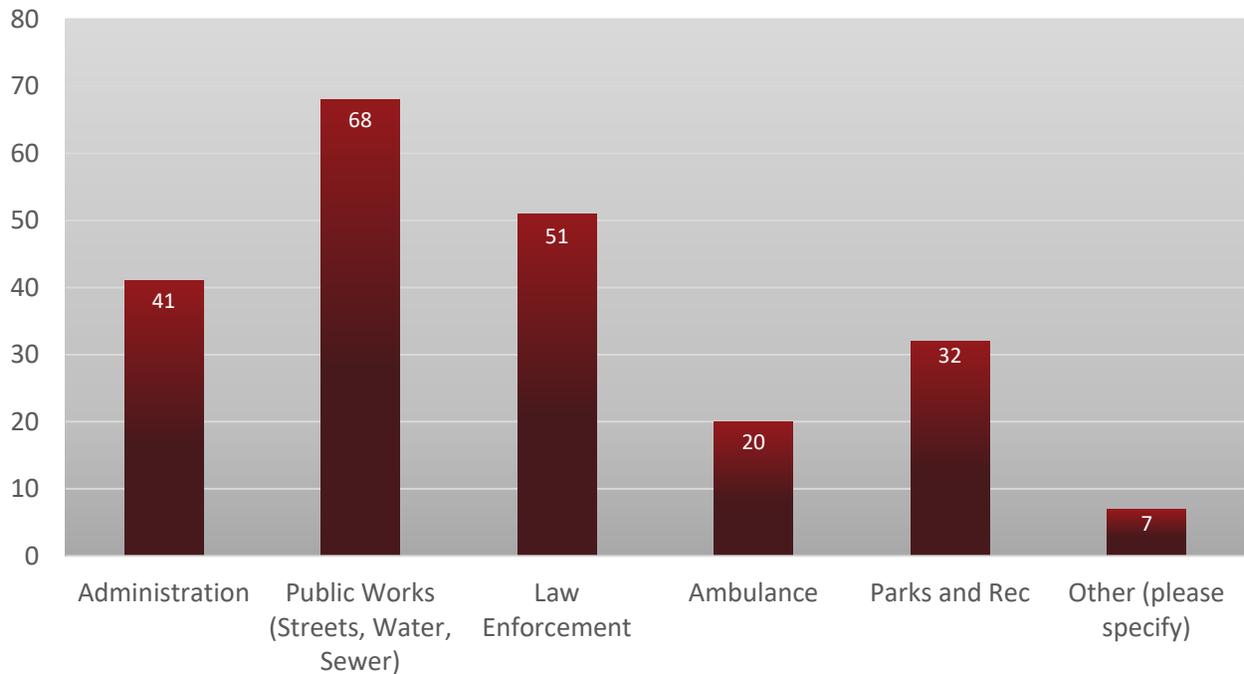
**Q.4: Overall, how satisfied are you with the following governmental services provided by the County in Audubon County:**



**Q.5: What governmental services are the most important to you?  
(Only one answer per column)**

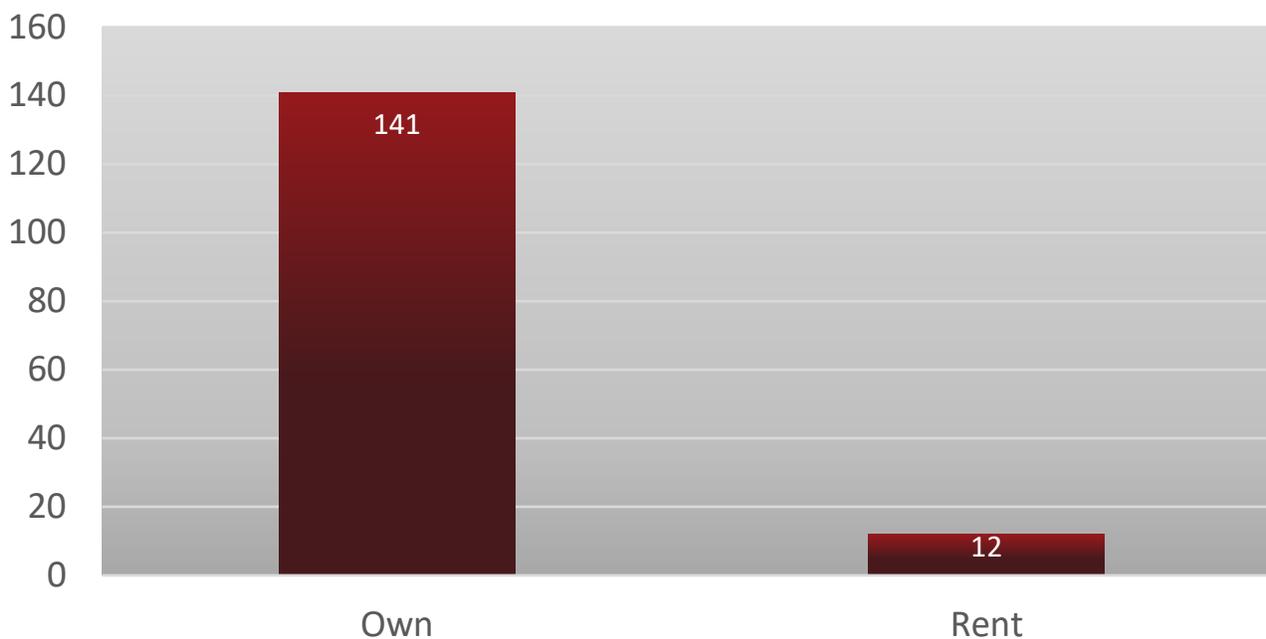


**Q.6: In what areas do you believe that the County and Cities could increase cooperation?**

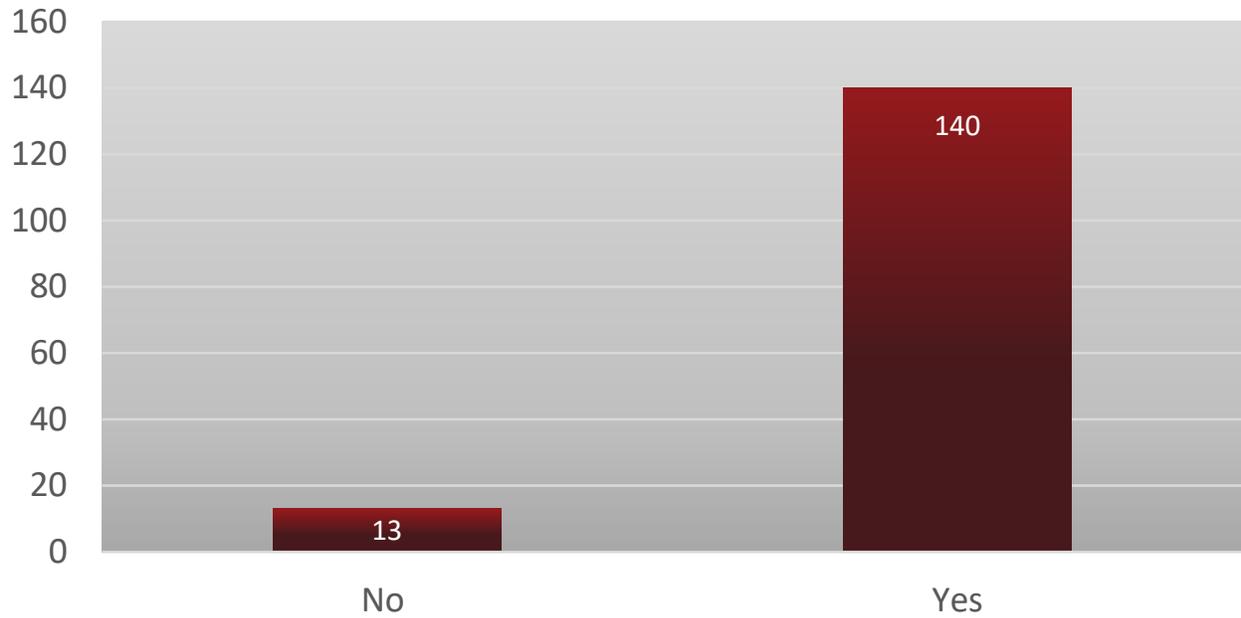


**Other Responses:** County highway shoulder maintenance, Fire and Rescue needs a new building for Audubon, Garbage/Sanitation, Public Transportation & Economic Development, Rural roads, Secondary road conditions south of Highway 44, The more cooperation between city and county the stronger our town will be

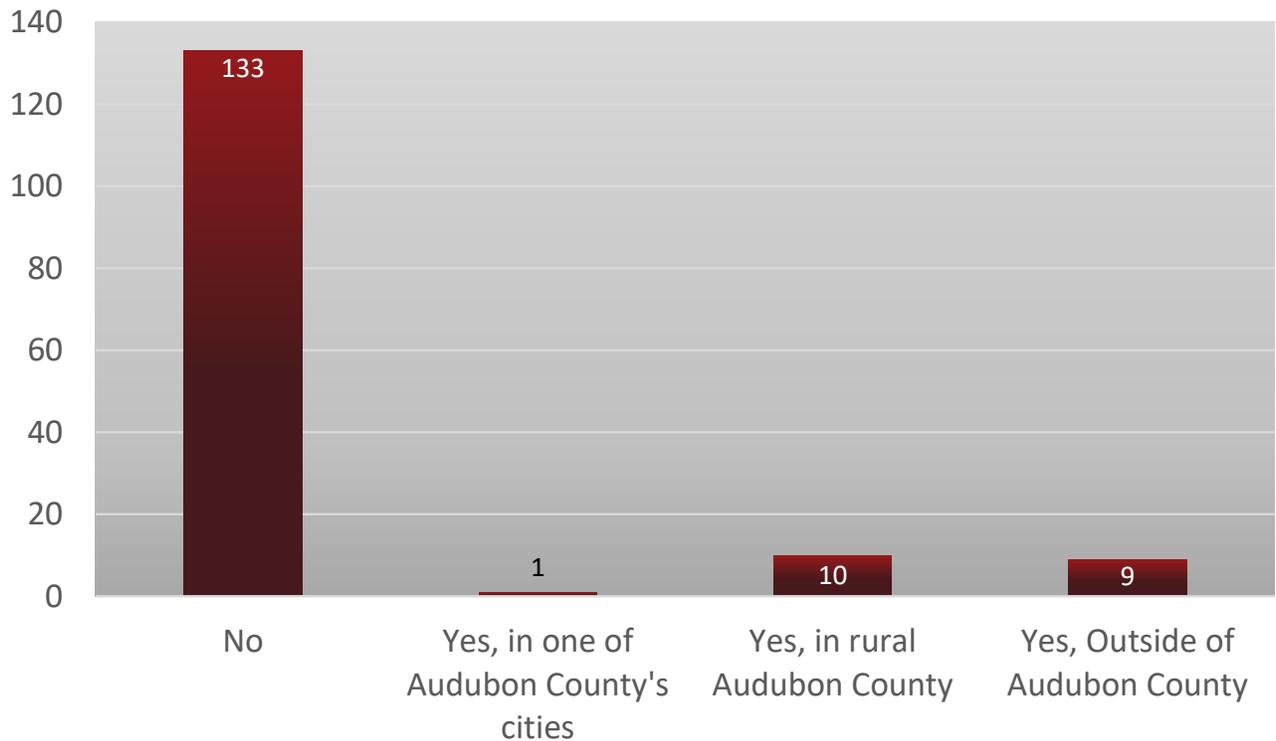
**Q.7: Do you own or rent your current residence?**



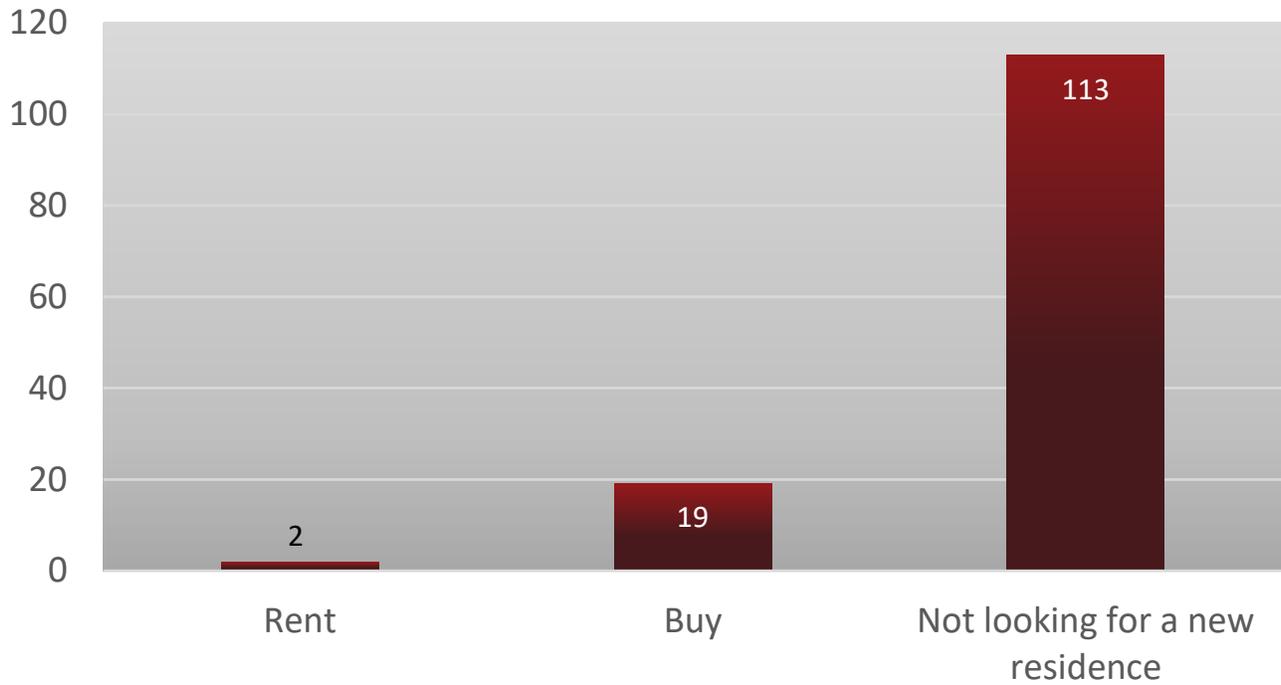
Q.8: Do you have the resources to maintain and keep up your current house?



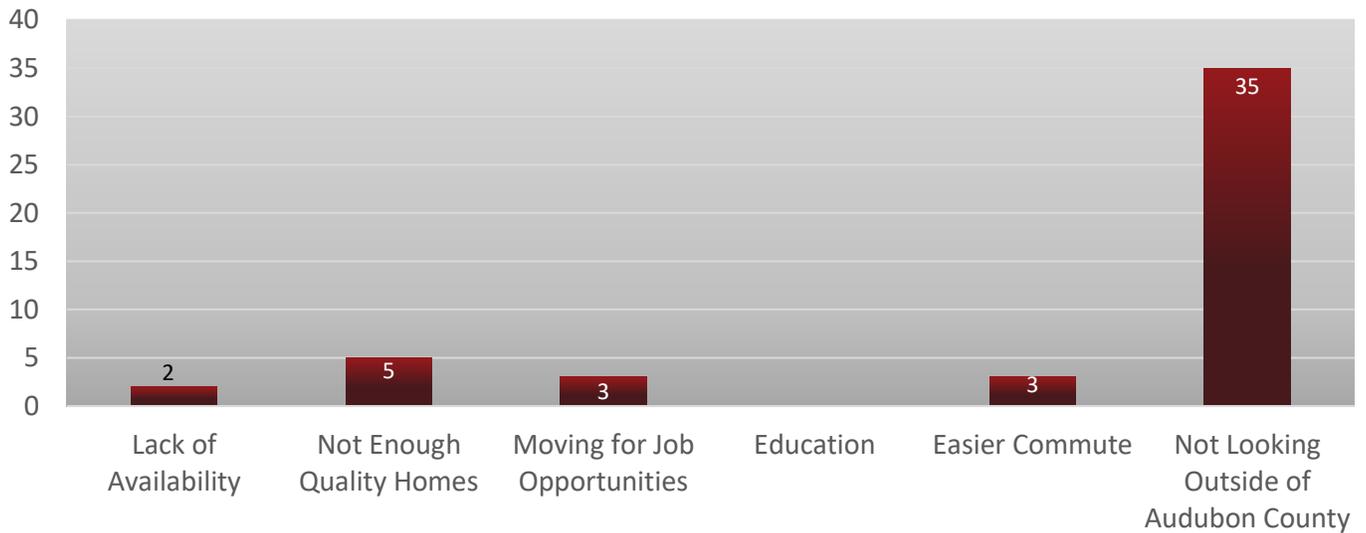
Q.9: Are you currently looking for a new residence?



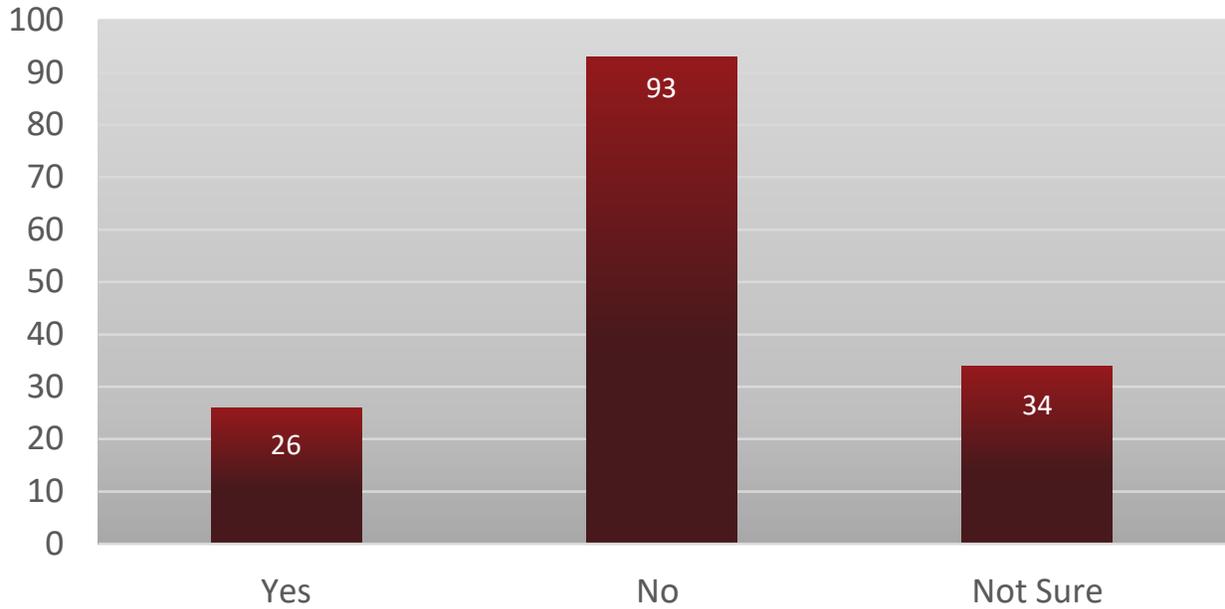
Q.10: If looking for a new residence, are you looking to buy or rent?



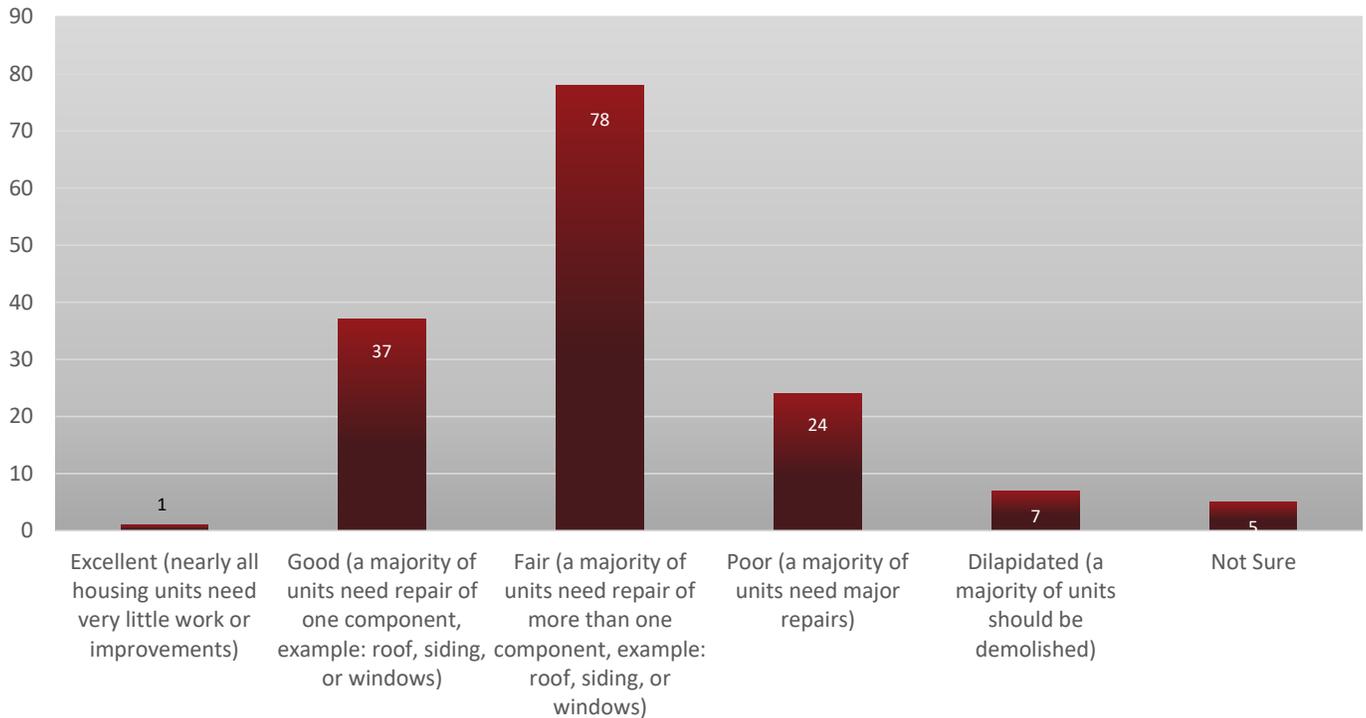
Q.11: If you answered “yes outside of Audubon County”, why are you looking outside of the County? Please check all that apply.



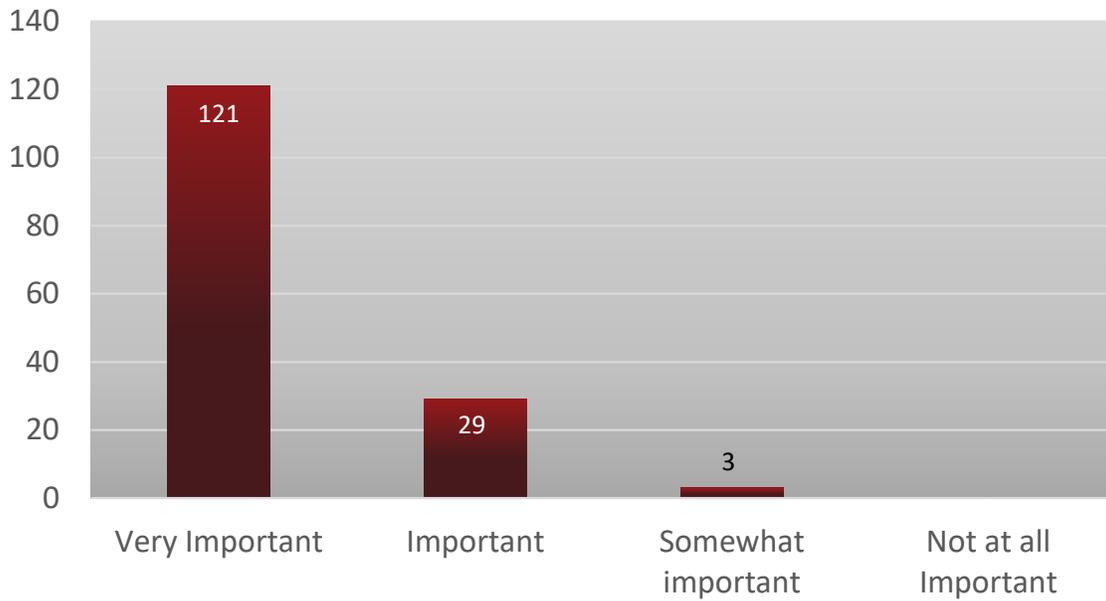
**Q.12: Do you think there is an adequate supply of available housing choices (type, cost, condition) in Audubon County?**



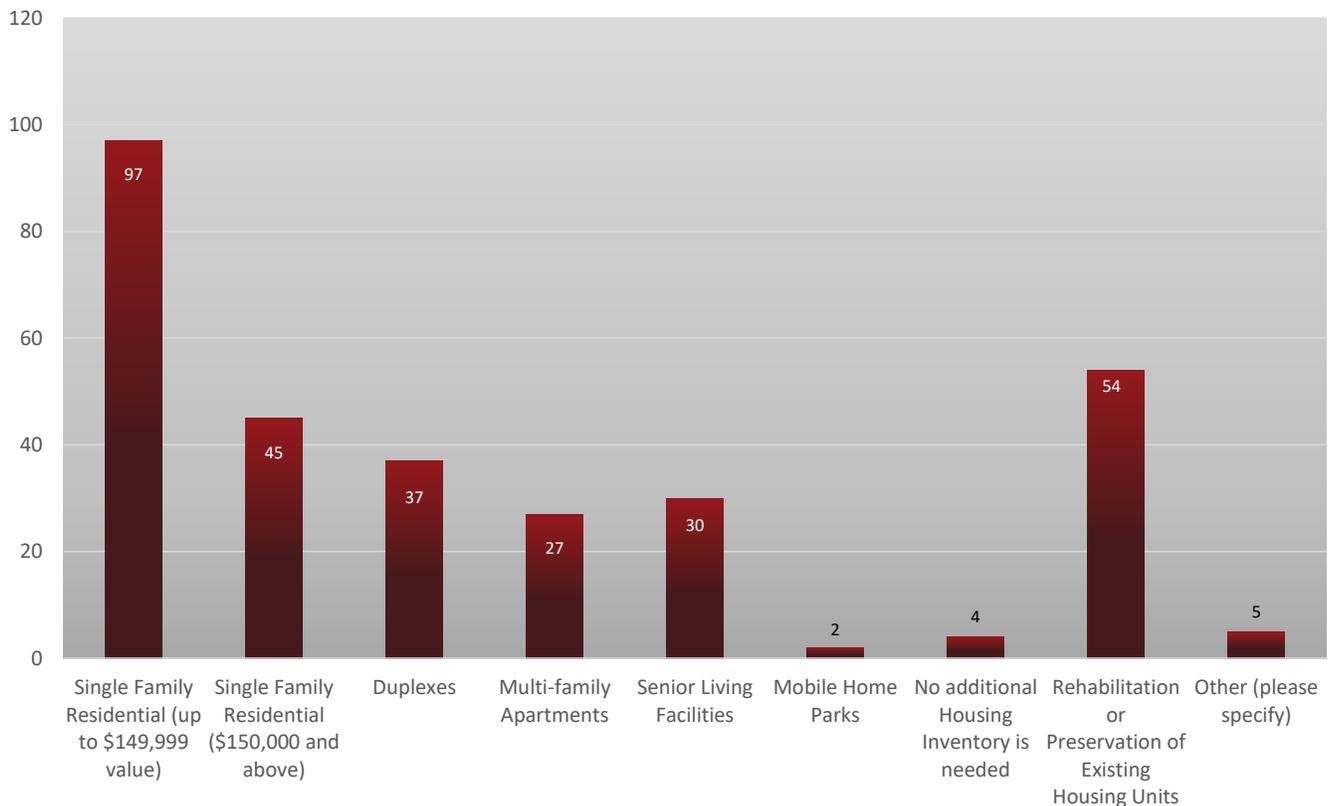
**Q.13: Overall, how would you rate the condition of the houses in Audubon County?**



**Q.14: How important is maintaining your property to you?**

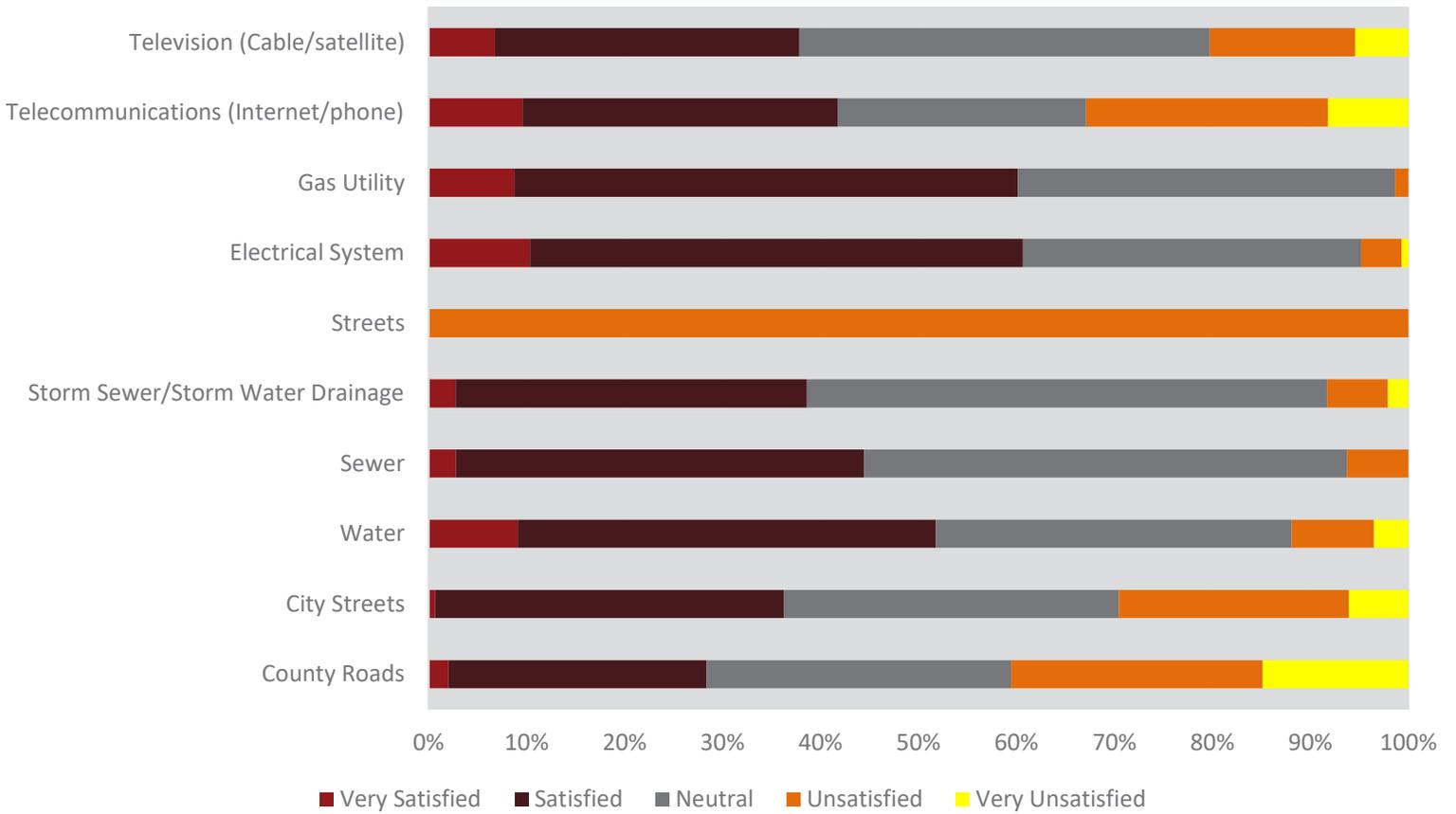


**Q.15: What type(s) of housing do you think needs to be added, or available, in Audubon County (if any)? Please check all that apply.**

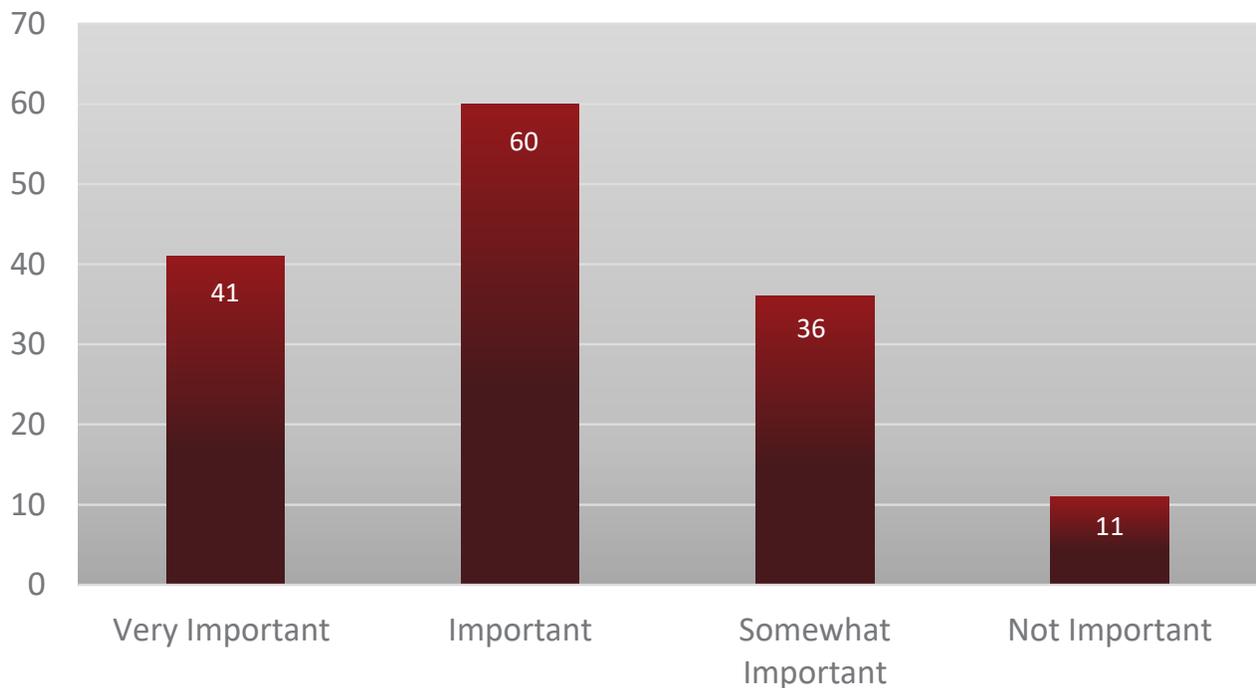


**Other Responses: One story efficient apartments, Affordable housing, Also from \$75,000-\$100,000, Assisted living facilities, Condos**

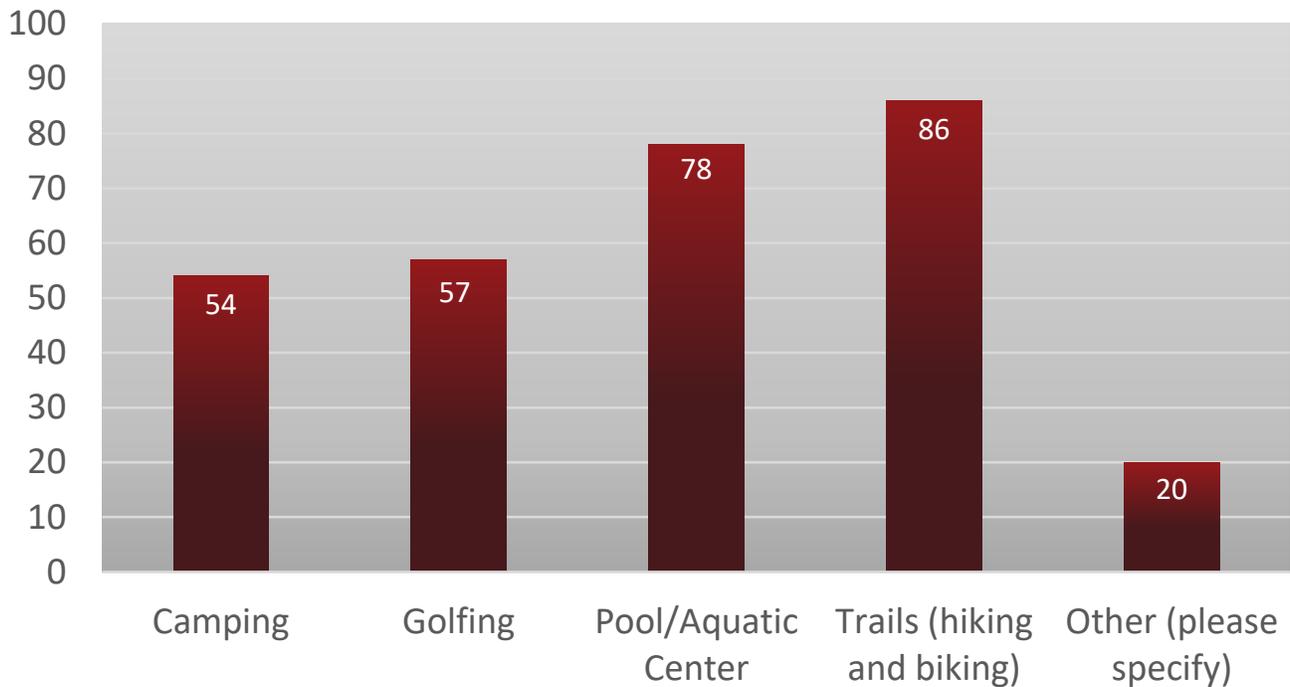
**Q.16: Overall, how satisfied are you with the infrastructure in Audubon County?**



**Q.17: How important are recreational facilities to you and your family?**



Q.18: What type of recreational facilities do you/would you utilize if they were available in Audubon County?

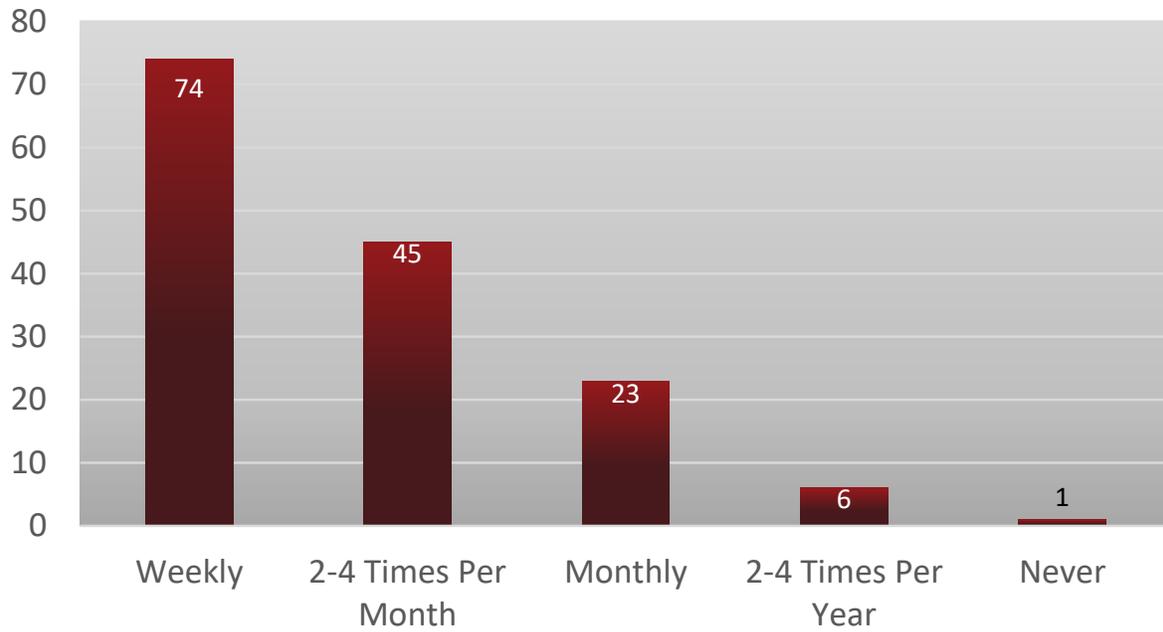


Other Responses: ATV Trails (2), Bull Valley Speedway, Disc Golf, Dog Park (2), Fishing (2), Hunting, Fitness Center, Indoor Pool, Indoor Recreation, Large lake for boating, Parks, Pickleball, Public gym, Rec Center (2), Shelters, Skate Park, Updated Parks, Walking trail between Kimballton and Elk Horn, There are two parks/nature areas that are neglected and being used for illegal dumping

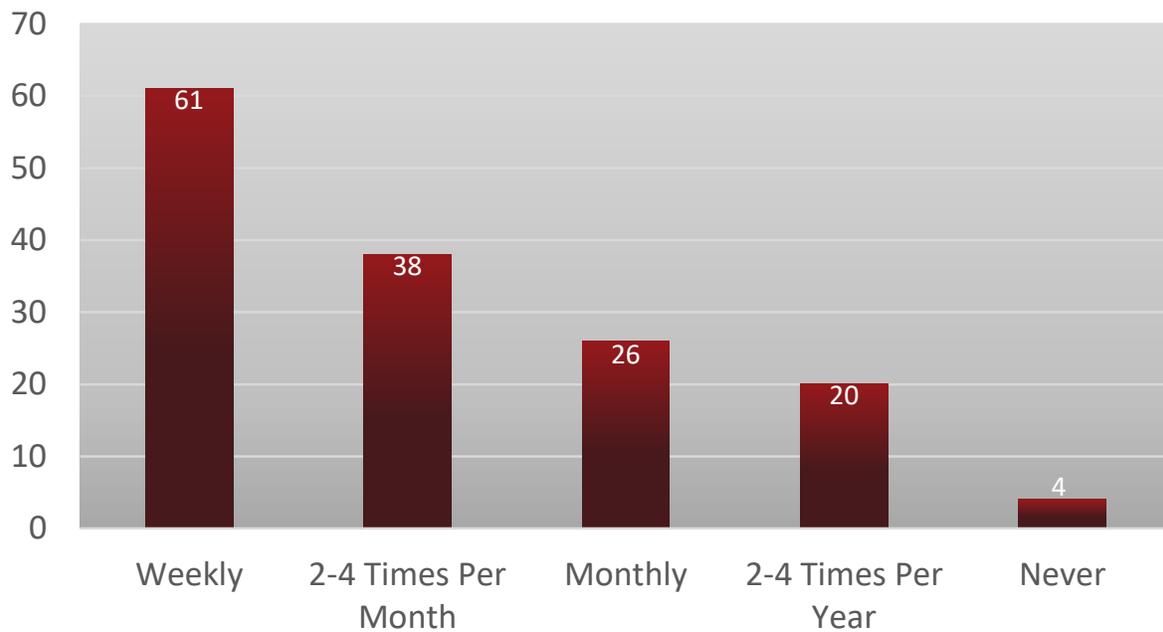
Q.19: What types of retail development do you feel Audubon County is lacking?

Responses: 2nd Hand Stores (2), General Store other than Dollar General, Grocery store is lacking and not fresh food options, Grocery Store (14), Pharmacy, Sit-down family restaurant, Something similar to Walmart/Target (3), A store with quality shoes/clothes, Every type (5), Affordable stores, Apparel - clothing and shoes - men and women (22), Basic home goods (2), Basic needs, Bomgaars (2), Brewery (2), Child boutique/clothing (2), Meat Locker (2), Electronic, Appliance Repair, Farm Store (5), Department store (18), Dollar Tree, Fresh Produce, Gas Station, Hardware Store (2), Gym, Nail Salon, Summer ice cream shop, Small businesses, None, Not much people need to just support local, nothing here have to leave the county for everything, Privately owned businesses, Property taxes on businesses are way too high, Restaurants, Retail (3), Unique gift shop/coffee shop, More than Dollar General

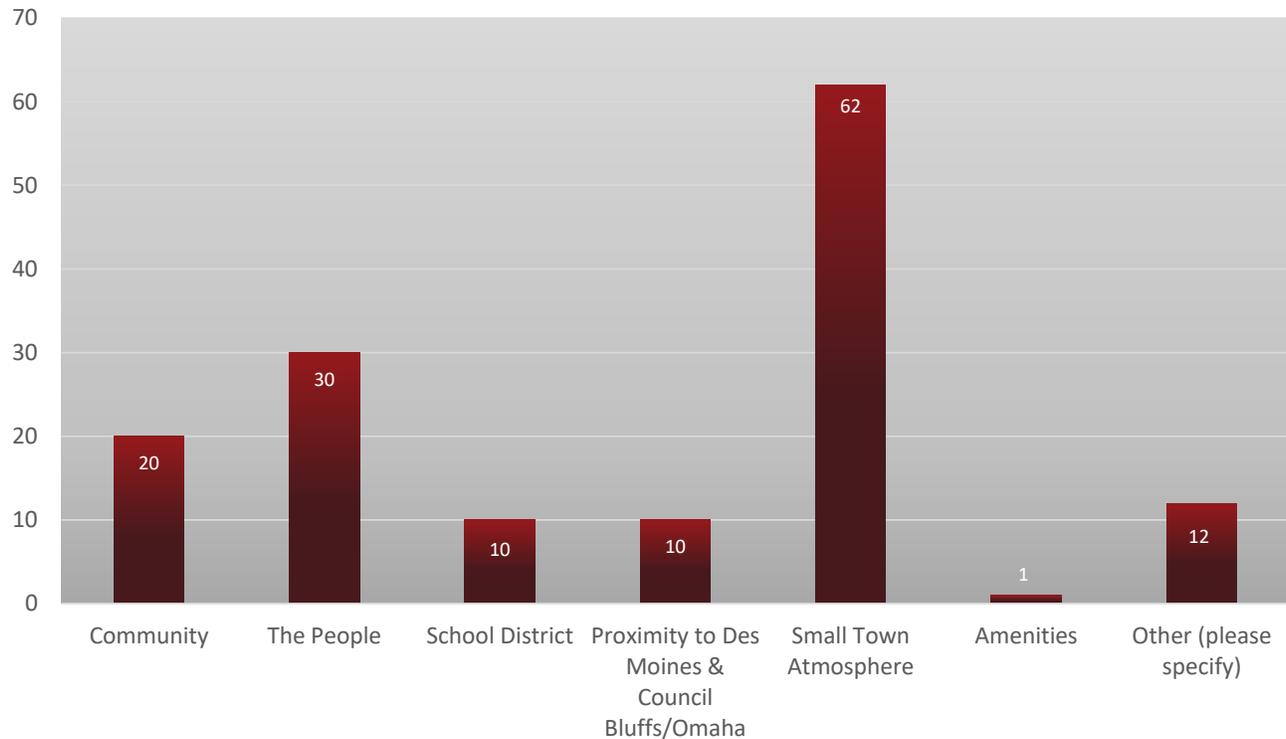
Q.20: How often do you shop outside of Audubon County?



Q.21: How often do you use the internet to purchase items outside of Audubon County?

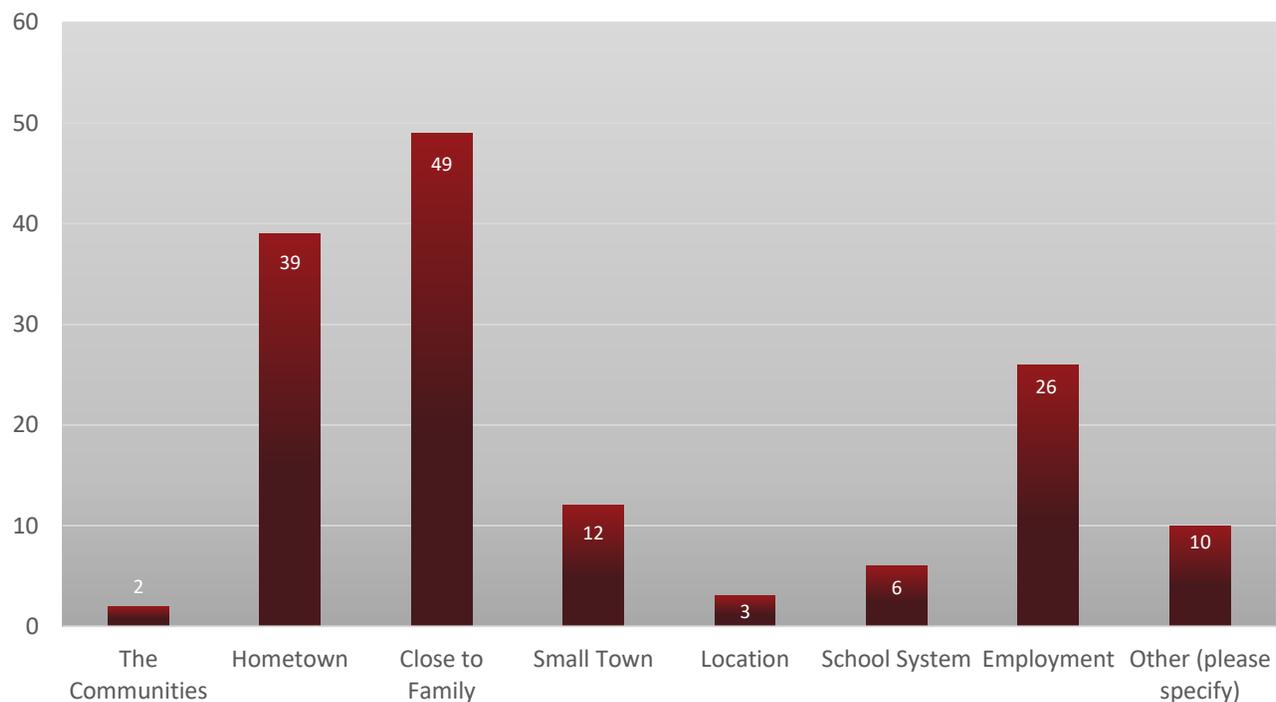


Q.22: What is your favorite part of living in Audubon County?



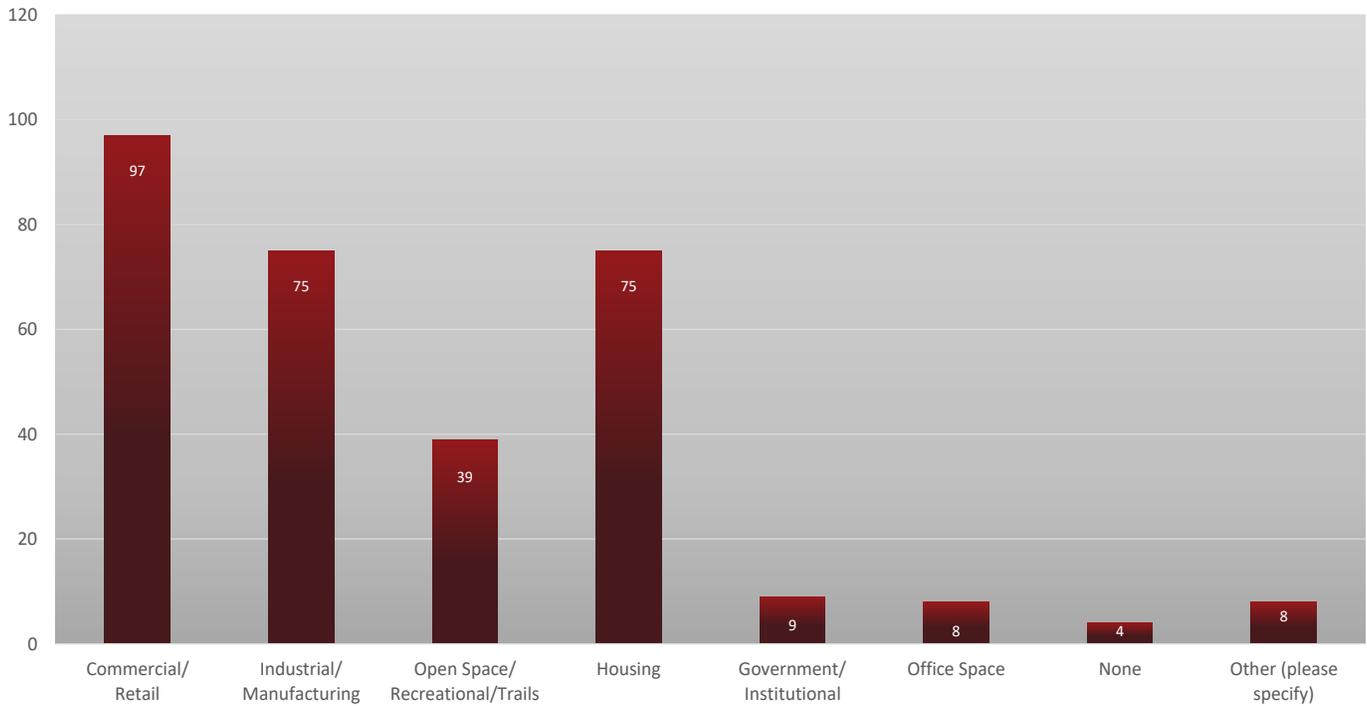
Other Responses: Cheap electricity in Kimballton, Cost of living (2), Everything, Family (2), Low taxes, Reasonable regulations, Our farm (2)

Q.23: Why did you choose to live in Audubon County?



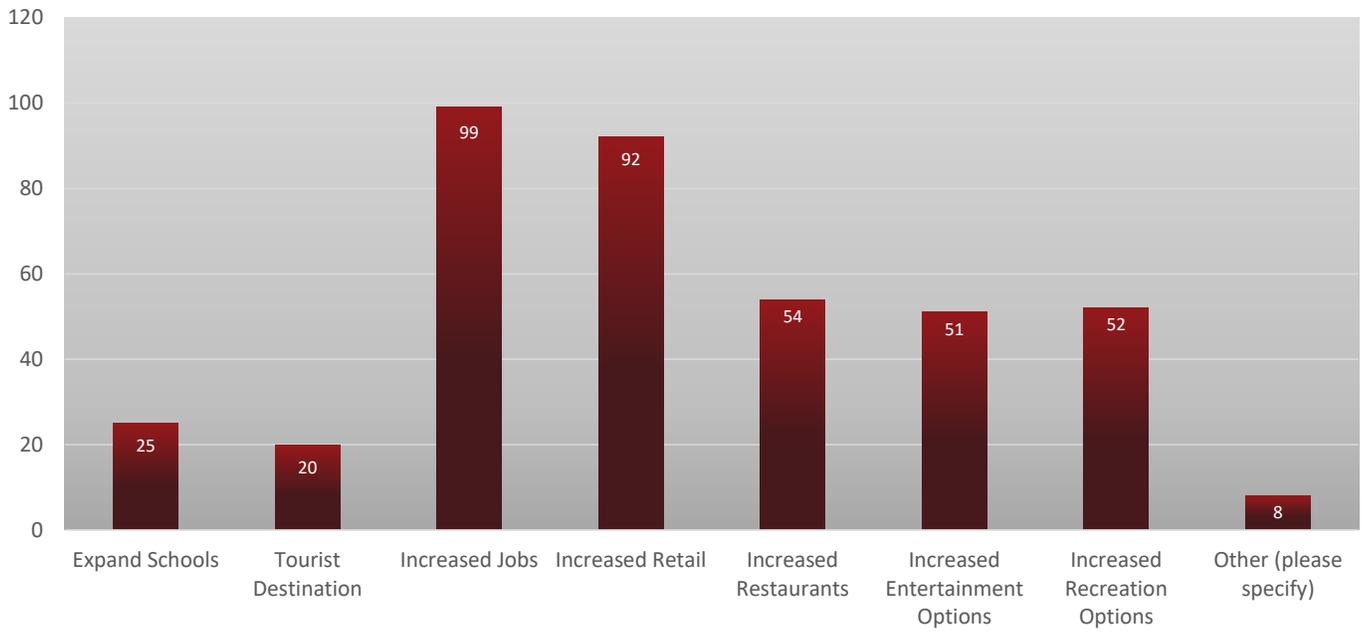
Other Responses: Employment, Everything, Farm ground was significantly cheaper to buy than other parts of the state, Grew up here, Housing price, Inherited, Spouse/significant other lived here (3), Our farm

Q.24: In the coming years, what type of development would you like to see in Audubon County?



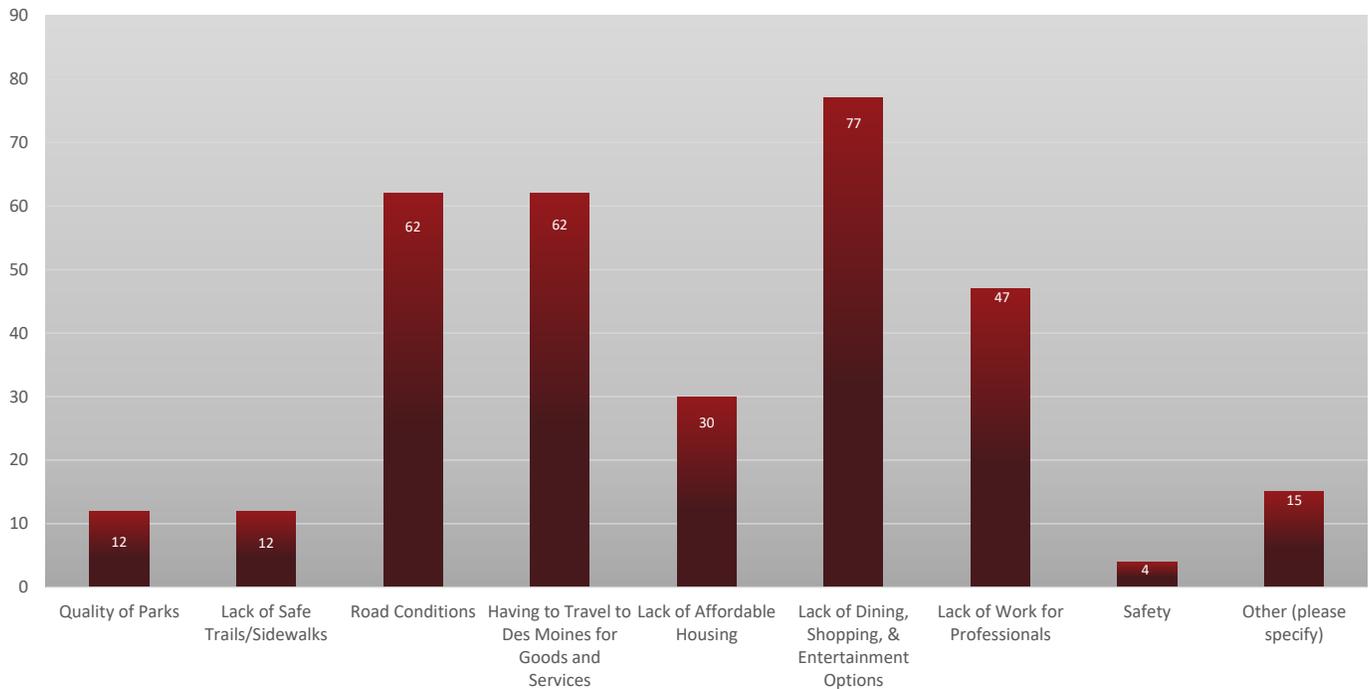
Other Responses: Anything that would bring jobs/population growth, Assisted living, Be nice to help out the businesses that are already here, Broadband, I'd like to see some houses torn down, Jobs, Service businesses, Needed annexation, Support for the things we have

### Q.25: What is your vision of Audubon County over the next 20 years?



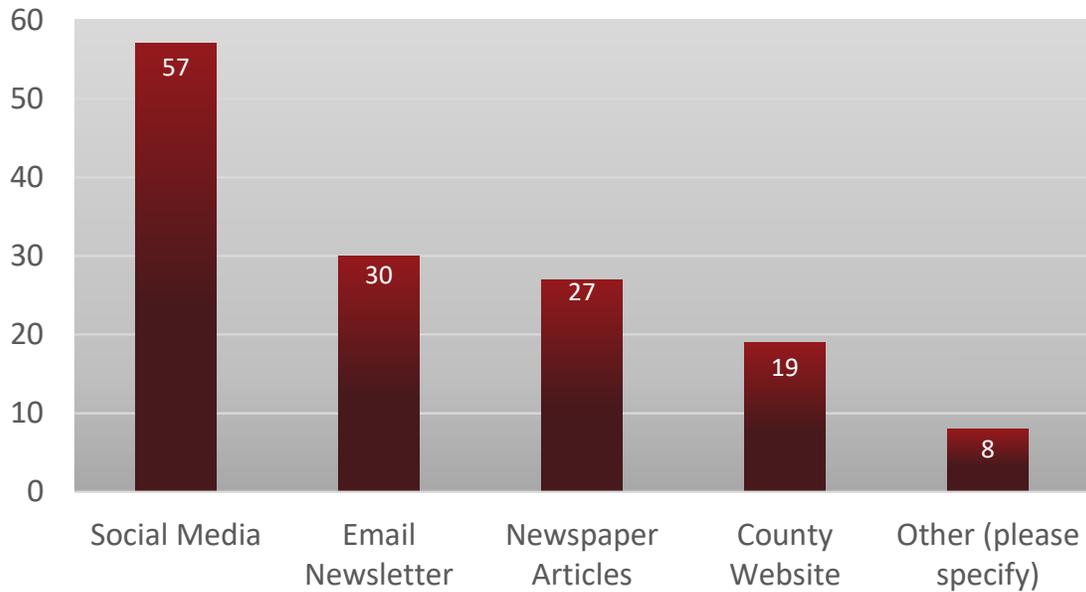
**Other Responses:** Better paying jobs and workforce with training/education to do them, Bring back 11 man football, Fix roads, Housing, Infrastructure improvements, Repair and maintenance of the assets we have, Larger Sheriff's Department, More Manufacturing, More service businesses, More home construction, Expand city limits, Our county will continue to decline without jobs

## Q.26: What challenges/struggles do you face as a resident of Audubon County?



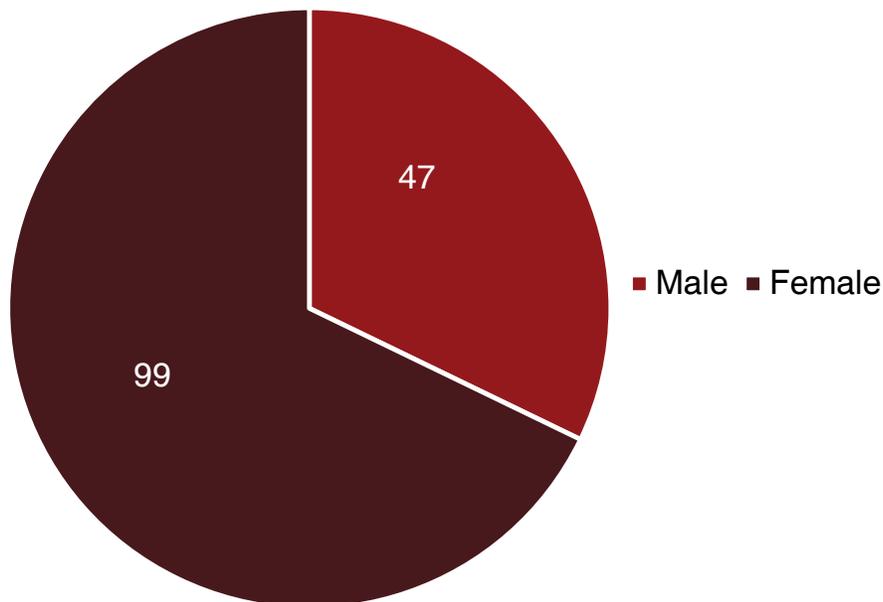
**Other Responses:** Maintenance of what we currently have (theater, golf course, rec center), Better run law enforcement, Consistent health care providers, Drug problem and drug dealers, Employment, Having to travel to Omaha to shop or medical reasons, Lack of general labor/manufacturing jobs, Lack of quality employable population to fill job availability, More industry, None, Options for elderly living accommodations, Poor rural high speed internet, Training for HS grads to get better jobs locally, Unable to find quality employees, WiFi connectivity

Q.27: How do you prefer the County to communicate with you?

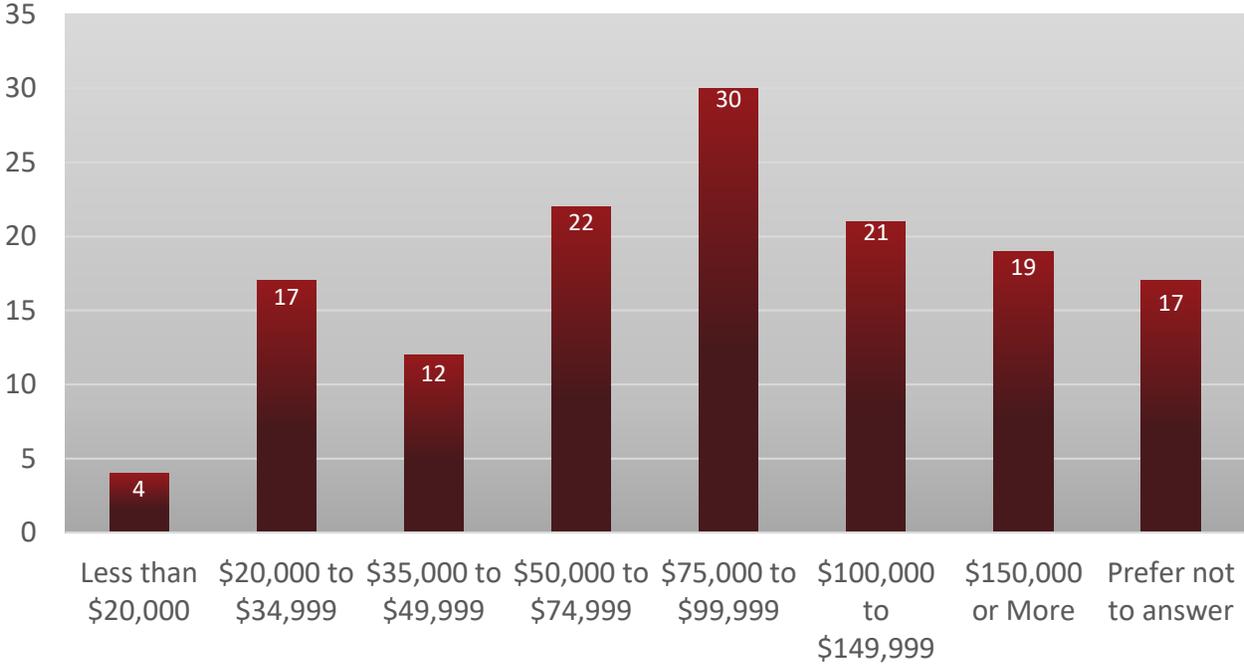


Other Responses: All of the above (3), Personal Touch (2), Remember a lot of people depend on newspaper, radio & TV because of no internet, County news and record needs to be in free paper, Email, Text or phone call, Letters by mail (3)

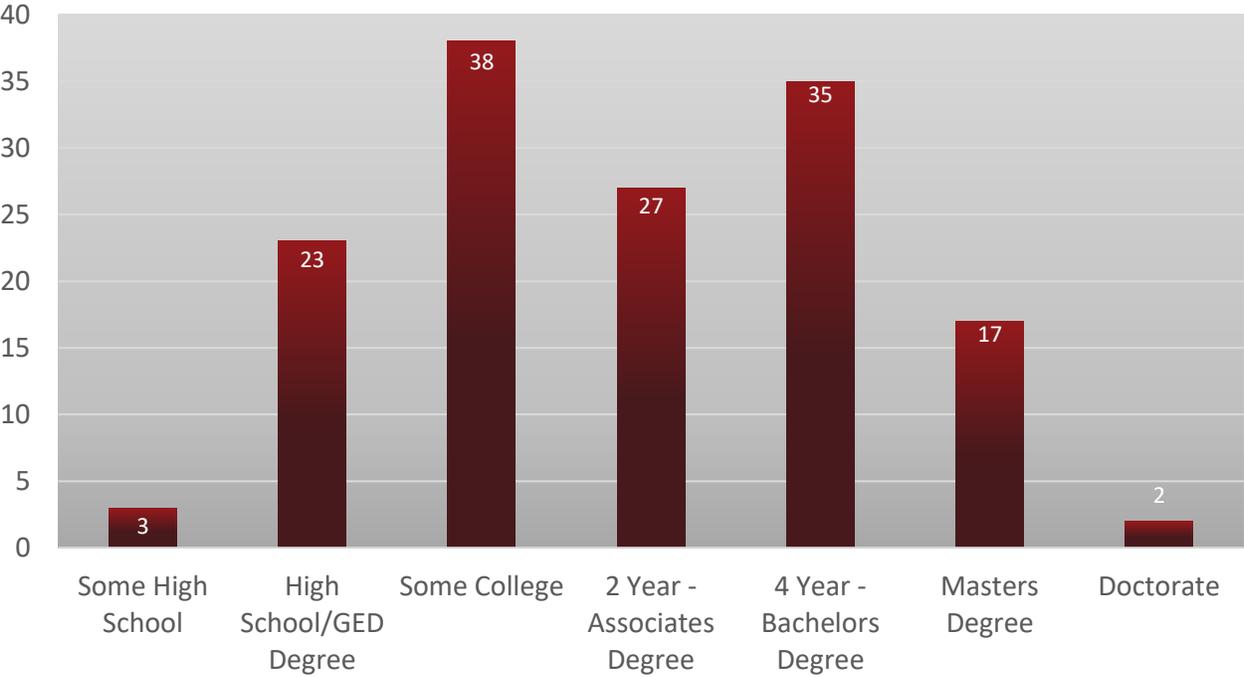
Q.28: Are you male or female?



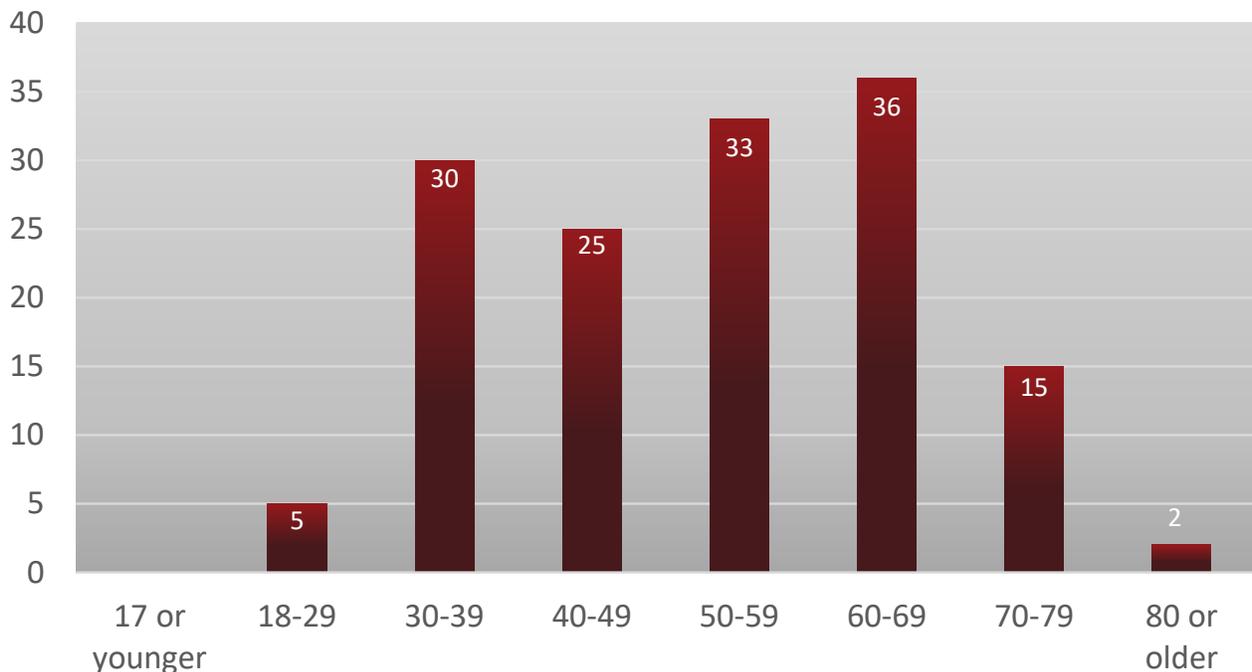
**Q.29: Please estimate your total household income in 2019? This includes money from jobs; net income from business, farm, or rent; pensions; dividends; interest; social security payments.**



**Q.30: What is your level of education?**



Q.31: Which category below includes your age



Q.32: Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Please feel free to make any additional comments below.

Responses:

- A lot of these questions are more or less centered around the town of Audubon. Government officials fail to remember the rest of the rural areas of Audubon County.
- Audubon is a lovely place to live. Please increase things for the young people to do. We need to keep them here.
- Housing is cheap in audubon and adding any low income housing will just attract outside druggies. We have low income housing that should be for seniors but convicted druggies now live there. We need to help improve the houses here and bring up their value and make it so it is safer for decent people.
- I would like to see the city ordinances in Exira be enforced. I would like to see the city workers do their jobs better. I would like to see the run-down houses bulldozed and new housing put in.
- If we are looking to grow Audubon County, I feel we need to get more housing - all types. Especially, in the smaller towns. I feel a lot of effort has been put into Audubon for housing but has lacked the support for other smaller towns. If the smaller towns keep declining in population (and we just continue to knock down old homes but not find creative solutions to put new housing up) that will have an affect on the city of Audubon, too, in regards to the amount of people they serve with their different businesses and industries.
- If you want to keep businesses and people to keep buying houses then lower your property taxes. Taxes are too high and in these tough times we need less property

taxes. Tax breaks or credits for business owners.

- In general Audubon County doesn't care about residents living outside the Audubon area.
- Our Public Health staff needs education and training. They are completely incompetent. They should all have some kind of Healthcare background to be in the job. If they don't they need replaced.
- Somehow need to get people to understand that price is not everything and they need to support local ---- good luck with this.
- Thank you for your work.
- The lack of basic needs gas stations.. grocery stores... clothes.. 80% of my money is spent out of county... the small business that are here are still 25 miles away.... if I can't get what I need I will drive the distance for the convenience of having most items needed in one area....
- There needs to be more diversity on the city council and have a city council/mayor that is more proactive and have more pride in the community. They seem indifferent on bettering the community.
- To attract good employees we need to offer adequate housing. We have numerous housing that needs torn down to deter low income people from living here that are not willing to work. Our community needs to be built up of people willing to work. Hard to attract businesses when we have so many unemployed people not willing to take on a job.
- We need builders, service people and a solar project
- What is the main purpose of this survey? What are the objectives? Is this just a survey for information with no outcome?